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The Eternals

Brian David-Marshall
 The Week That Was
 Friday, August 31, 2007



This week takes me to Japan's National Championship, and with that all the complexities of traveling halfway around the world. Rather than tussle with my normal deadline and the International Date Line (a fight I'm bound to lose), I am turning over the reins this week to Bill Stark for his recap of the Legacy and Vintage Championships from two weeks ago.

Before handing things off, there are a couple of Nationals results that have been shipped my way since last week's column that I wanted to make sure got some time in the spotlight.

At New Zealand's National Championship, there were four different decks in the top four spots. Kerel Laycock won the captaincy playing a Gruul deck that bore more than a passing resemblance to the winning decklist from the MSS Championships a few weeks ago. Depending on which section of James White's second-place deck you look at, you could think you were seeing several different decks ranging from Perilous Storm to Gruul to black-white control. The remaining spots were earned by Andrew Pilston with Blink Touch and Douglas Wilson with Dredge. [Click here](#) for the Top 8 decklists.

If you want to see the decklists from Philippines Nationals you can [find the lists here](#) with three different archetypes getting their pilots berths at Nationals. A *Tarmogoyf/Rack* list took the top honor in the hands of Jose Marie Sabale. The next two spots went to Jason Ascalon and Mark Baeyens playing AngelFire. The final spot went to Mark Herrin playing OmniChord. Good luck at Worlds, guys!

If you are looking for some more cutting-edge Standard technology, keep your browser aimed squarely at the Tournament Center all weekend long. I will be doing live coverage from Japanese Nationals while Hanno Terbuyken will be manning the internet connection from German Nationals. But that's more than enough Standard for today...take it away Bill!

Team Spirit Dominates Legacy, Vintage Championships

By Bill Stark

Gen Con was a smashing success this year and the wealth of attendance at Magic events certainly goes a long way toward demonstrating the truth of that statement. Two of the more popular events (which have perhaps the most relevancy to their respective formats) were the annual Legacy and Vintage Championships. Vintage, with its active community and resurgence in popularity over the past few years, doesn't have many premier-level opportunities to shine throughout the year, which means the Championship serves to highlight some of the Vintage community's biggest stars. Legacy, on the other hand, benefits from the occasional Grand Prix and has even become a Pro Tour format when it was announced it would be one of three individual formats at Worlds this year.



Legacy Championship: Finding the Threshold

The Top 8 of the Gen Con Legacy Championship was all about two things: the rise of Threshold in a post-Flash world and the wealth of Canadian players who took up most of the single-elimination slots. In particular, a group of Ontario players calling themselves "Team Supreme" made up an inordinately high percentage of the players playing for the title of champion. One of the team's most outspoken members, Ryan Trepanier, took the time to answer a few questions about the exploits of the Team.



Team Supreme left-right: Marc Sims, James Harris, Ryan Trepanier,

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You might recognize Trepanier's name from *Steve Conway, Marty Birthelmer*. the [Grand Prix-Columbus](#) Top 8 class where he played Flash Hulk. Officially the team consists of Marty Birthelmer, James Harris, Steve Conway, Marc Sims, and Trepanier himself and of the five, three managed to find themselves seated during the Legacy Top 8 (Birthelmer, Trepanier, and Conway).

So how did the team get started? "Team Supreme is the brainchild of both Marc Sims and Steve Conway," Trepanier said. "More or less it was just a really fun thing to do, to create a Vintage team. We all loved the format and usually faired pretty well at most tournaments. It just seemed to make sense to unite as a team."

"While it seems our team was formed as a group of friends who all enjoyed the Supremes, I still hold firm that Marc and Steve really wanted a good reason to wear Diana Ross t-shirts to Vintage events," Trepanier added.

But do the members of Team Supreme only focus on the Vintage and Legacy formats?

"Honestly I don't consider myself a Vintage/Legacy player." Ryan said. "My first and foremost priority is the PTQ format. Marty Birthelmer is also a fellow PTQ player. Marc Sims and James Harris strictly play Vintage (I believe Gen Con was Marc's first Legacy tournament). Steve is about the exact opposite of me...primarily a Vintage/Legacy player."

That label certainly seems accurate as Conway was the only player at Gen Con this year to achieve the rare back-to-back Top 8 in the Legacy Championship on Friday and again at the Vintage Championship on Saturday. He fell during the quarterfinals of both events but his performances add credence to Team Supreme's prowess of the game's oldest formats.

LEGACY DECKLISTS

A breakdown of the top 32 decks played at the 2007 Legacy Championship:

Threshold	9
Goblins	4
Cephalid Breakfast	3
Landstill	3
Aggro Loam	2
Iggy Pop	2
Charbelcher/Iggy Pop	1
Charbelcher	1
43Land	1
Lion's Eye Ichorid	1
Blue-white-green	1
The Hunted	1
Aluren	1
Stifle Naught	1
Blue-green (splash white-red)	1

For complete decklists from the Top 32, [click here](#).

Legacy Championship Top 8 Profiles

Name: James King
Age: 23

Hometown: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Occupation: Artist/Contracting

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 6

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 2

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 0

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

Other previous Magic accomplishments:

Joining Team ICBM.

What deck are you playing and why?

I'm playing Jeff Rabovsky's Threshold list because it is AMAZING. I like to make it rain, and this deck facilitates that.

What card is the most powerful in the format?

Force of Will. It is the nuts in every format and is the only thing that keeps things in check. **Tarmogoyf.** is a close second. That card let Threshold run a-train on Goblins.

What deck is the most powerful in the format?

Mine, obv.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

Owen Turtenwald is my hookup on the sweet list. Jeff Rabovsky helped coach me and make a sideboard. Alex Groh tested the combo match with me almost infinite and ICBM always is there for help with my play and lists. I watched a lot of sports (Cubs suck and the Bears suck. Go Brewers!).



James King, Threshold		
2007 Legacy Championship Top 8		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Polluted Delta	4 Force of Will	3 Spell Snare
4 Flooded Strand	4 Daze	2 Vedalken Shackles
4 Tropical Island	3 Counterspell	4 Pyroclasm

4 Volcanic Island	4 Serum Visions	3 Krosan Grip
1 Island	4 Opt	1 Counterspell
17 lands	4 Brainstorm	2 Engineered Explosives
4 Nimble Mongoose	4 Fire // Ice	15 sideboard cards
4 Quirion Dryad	4 Lightning Bolt	
4 Tarmogoyf	31 other spells	
12 creatures		

Name: Marty Birthelmer
Age: 21
Hometown: Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Occupation: Student/Super Cool Dude

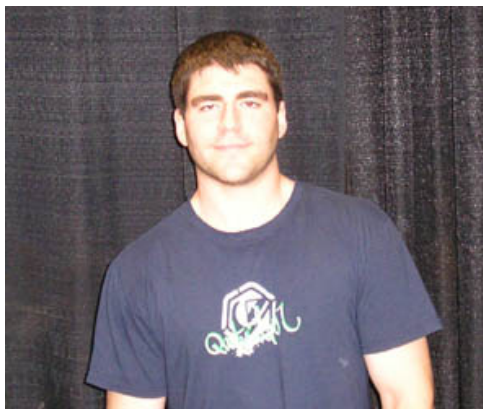
Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 1

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 0

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 0

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

Other previous Magic accomplishments: PTQ and JSS wins



What deck are you playing and why?
 4 Color Landstill. It beats everything and loses to everything on bad land draws.

What card is the most powerful in the format?
 Aether Vial or Brainstorm with a fetchland out.

What deck is the most powerful in the format?
 Ryan Trepanier's. It's my only auto-loss apparently. He's a sack.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?
 Mild testing with Team Supreme.

(Shout out to TEAM SUPREME!)

Marty Birthelmer, Landstill		
2007 Legacy Championship Top 8		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards	15 sideboard cards	
4 Flooded Strand	4 Force of Will	4 Meddling Mage
4 Mishra's Factory	4 Standstill	4 Duress
4 Tundra	4 Counterspell	4 Engineered Plague
3 Underground Sea	4 Brainstorm	3 Blue Elemental Blast
3 Tropical Island	4 Swords to Plowshares	
3 Wasteland	4 Pernicious Deed	
3 Nantuko Monastery	3 Stifle	
24 lands	3 Fact or Fiction	
0 creatures	2 Crucible of Worlds	
	2 Innocent Blood	
	2 Disenchant	
	36 other spells	

Name: David Caplan
Age: 19
Hometown: Toronto

Occupation: Student/IT Technician

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: This is my first

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 0

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: Day 2 at Grand Prix-Columbus with the same deck.

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: None.

Other previous Magic accomplishments: None.

What deck are you playing and why?

Ugr Thrash because I am comfortable with it.

What card is the most powerful in the format?

Tarmogoyf/Brainstorm

What deck is the most powerful in the format?

It is too diverse to tell.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

Lam Phan, Grand Prix-Philadelphia Top 8er, helped me build. I prepared with a nice 8 hour drive overnight.



David Caplan, Threshold		
2007 Legacy Championship Top 8		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
3 Flooded Strand	4 Opt	3 Tormod's Crypt
3 Polluted Delta	4 Brainstorm	3 Engineered Explosives
4 Tropical Island	2 Mental Note	3 Pyroclasm
4 Volcanic Island	4 Stifle	2 Krosan Grip
4 Wasteland	4 Force of Will	2 Red Elemental Blast
18 lands	4 Daze	2 Pyroblast
4 Tarmogoyf	4 Spell Snare	15 sideboard cards
4 Nimble Mongoose	4 Fire // Ice	
8 creatures	4 Lightning Bolt	
	34 other spells	

Name: Ryan Trepanier

Age: 19

Hometown: Hammer Town, Ontario

Occupation: Professional Loudmouth
Extrordinaire/Student/Idiot

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 1

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 1st

Number of Times Playing on the Pro

Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 1 Pro Tour, 2 Grand Prix Day 2s

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 1 (Grand Prix-Columbus)

Other previous Magic accomplishments:

2004 Provincial Champion, joining "Team Supreme"

What deck are you playing and why?

43Land.dec. Not only is the deck ridiculously fun to play, but it has a favorable aggro, control/aggro matchup. Also, I wanted to prove that I can do well with a deck OTHER than Flash.

What card is the most powerful in the format?

Brainstorm. However, it is such a skill-testing card that half the time it is played incorrectly.


What deck is the most powerful in the format?

Threshold. It has all the best cards in the format and can put on a fast clock with great disruption.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

No preparation whatsoever. I picked a deck, got opinions from good players, and came to my final build. My team, "Team Supreme," helped out as much as they could, but no one knows too much about 43 Land.



Ryan Trepanier, 43Land		
2007 Legacy Championship Top 8		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard

4 Taiga	4 Life from the Loam	4 Armageddon
4 Wasteland	4 Exploration	4 Chalice of the Void
4 Rishadan Port	4 Manabond	4 Ghostly Prison
4 Maze of Ith	3 Mulch	3 Tormod's Crypt
4 Mishra's Factory	3 Gamble	
4 Tranquil Thicket		15 sideboard cards
3 Savannah	18 other spells	
3 Treetop Village		
3 Nantuko Monastery		
2 Barbarian Ring		
2 Windswept Heath		
2 Wooded Foothills		
1 The Tabernacle at Pendrell Vale		
1 Riftstone Portal		
1 Forgotten Cave		
42 lands		
0 creatures		

Name: Ernest Turck
Age: 23
Hometown: Rootstown

Occupation: Cook

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 2

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 2

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 0

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

Other previous Magic accomplishments: N/A



What deck are you playing and why?

Lion's Eye Ichorid because I didn't think people would expect it and because Joe George handed it to me.

What card is the most powerful in the format?

Tarmogoyf

What deck is the most powerful in the format?

Anything that uses the yard.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

I just kinda walked through the door. A friend said "play this" and I said "ok."

Ernest Turck, Lion's Eye Ichorid		
2007 Legacy Championship Top 8		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
4 Cephalid Coliseum	4 Lion's Eye Diamond	1 Unmask
2 Underground Sea	2 Careful Study	4 Pithing Needle
1 Dakmor Salvage	4 Deep Analysis	4 Leyline of the Void
7 lands	4 Breakthrough	1 Tropical Island
	3 Dread Return	1 Wonder
	3 Lotus Petal	3 Reverent Silence
	4 Bridge from Below	1 Chalice of the Void
	4 Cabal Therapy	15 sideboard cards
3 Putrid Imp	28 other spells	
3 Golgari Thug		
4 Golgari Grave-Troll		
2 Cephalid Sage		
4 Ichorid		
4 Narcomoeba		
4 Stinkweed Imp		
1 Flame-Kin Zealot		
25 creatures		

Name: Jesse Hatfield
Age: 17

Hometown: Fredericksburg, VA

Occupation: N/A

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 2

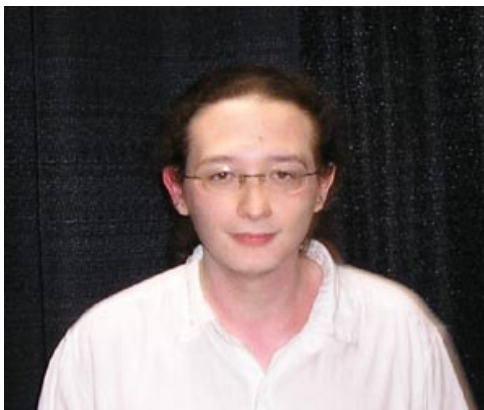
Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 2

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 0

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

Other previous Magic accomplishments:

Occasional success at various Legacy tournaments such as Starcitygames Duel for Duals and Mana Leak Open.



What deck are you playing and why?

Cephalid Breakfast because it is a two-card combo that wins the game for three mana and fits in a synergistic shell that can consistently assemble and protect it.

What card is the most powerful in the format?

Probably **Brainstorm**, but many powerful cards like **Force of Will** and now **Tarmogoyf** might come close.

What deck is the most powerful in the format?

Cephalid Breakfast if unprepared for. Threshold is also amazing (personally I prefer UGR).

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

Most of my testing is with dedicated Legacy players at the Lucky Frog in Annandale, VA.

Jesse Hatfield, Cephalid Breakfast		
2007 Legacy Championship Top 8		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Polluted Delta	1 Dread Return	4 Duress
4 Flooded Strand	1 Dragon Breath	4 Abeyance
4 Tundra	4 Force of Will	3 Dark Confidant
3 Tropical Island	4 Aether Vial	2 Echoing Truth
2 Underground Sea	2 Cabal Therapy	1 Stern Proctor
17 lands	4 Brainstorm	1 Crippling Fatigue
	4 Portent	
	4 Worldly Tutor	15 sideboard cards
	2 Eladamri's Call	
4 Nomads en-Kor	26 other spells	
1 Shaman en-Kor		
4 Cephalid Illusionist		
4 Tarmogoyf		
3 Narcomoeba		
1 Sutured Ghoul		
17 creatures		

Name: Peter Olszewski

Age: 28

Hometown: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Occupation: Grad Student/Instructor

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 2

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 2

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 0

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

Other previous Magic accomplishments: None



What deck are you playing and why?

U/G Threshold. It's Lam Phan's creation and he told me to go with it. It seemed to work out well!

What card is the most powerful in the format?

I don't know what 80% of the cards do. I don't know what else to say except James Horris asked me to include his name.

What deck is the most powerful in the format?

I have no clue – it seems a number of archetypes could be considered most powerful. Threshold seems to be quite powerful and consistent.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

No preparation – all credit goes to Lam Pham and Rich Mattiuzzo for their suggestions and help at the event. I came primarily to play Vintage, but was convinced to try the Legacy event. I had to read *Serum Visions* and *Mental Note* when I played them. :)

Peter Olszewski, Threshold		
2007 Legacy Championship Top 8		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
2 Island	4 Force of Will	4 Counterbalance
1 Breeding Pool	4 Daze	3 Sensei's Divining Top
2 Wooded Foothills	4 Stifle	4 Umezawa's Jitte
3 Flooded Strand	4 Predict	2 Krosan Grip
2 Polluted Delta	4 Portent	2 Hail Storm
4 Tropical Island	4 Brainstorm	
4 Wasteland	4 Spell Snare	15 sideboard cards
18 lands	1 Rushing River	
	1 Snapback	
	30 other spells	
4 Tarmogoyf		
4 Werebear		
4 Nimble Mongoose		
12 creatures		

Name: Steve Conway

Age: 24

Hometown: Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Occupation: Feng Shui Consultant

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 1st time attending

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 1st time attending

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: Never played in one

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: None

Other previous Magic accomplishments: I've won some multiplayer games

What card is the most powerful in the format?
Islands

What deck is the most powerful in the format?
Threshold

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?
I didn't prepare at all.



Steve Conway, Threshold		
2007 Legacy Championship Top 8		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Tropical Island	4 Force of Will	3 Threads of Disloyalty
4 Volcanic Island	4 Brainstorm	3 Pyroclasm
4 Wooded Foothills	4 Serum Visions	3 Pithing Needle
3 Flooded Strand	4 Spell Snare	2 Naturalize
3 Wasteland	4 Mental Note	2 Red Elemental Blast
18 lands	4 Daze	2 Engineered Explosives
	3 Stifle	15 sideboard cards
	3 Lightning Bolt	
4 Nimble Mongoose	2 Fire // Ice	
4 Tarmogoyf	32 other spells	
2 Werebear		

Still, despite taking up so many slots in the Top 8 it was a second group of Canadian players who managed to walk away with the Legacy Championship title in tow. Relative unknown Peter Olszewski from Toronto took home the trophy but admitted being familiar with the guys from Team Supreme. "We all know each other, we're all friends. We [Peter's team] don't work with them, but we see them all the time at events."

Teamwork is apparently an important aspect of playing **Magic** in Canada and Olszewski gave all the credit for his Threshold deck to teammate Lam Phan. Phan, the diminutive [Grand Prix-Philadelphia](#) Top 8er, is a well-known name within the Vintage and Legacy communities. Going into the tournament Peter had had some specific thoughts on the potential metagame, saying that he thought the format would reset to Threshold/Goblins archetypes after the Flash banning.

While Goblins didn't see as much play as many had expected, there was plenty of Threshold. "Our particular build of Threshold was supposed to have an edge against the mirror, and I felt that," Olszewski said. He explained the advantage comes from their sideboard "consisting of **Counterbalance** and Divining Top, that we have four **Wasteland**, and that we don't splash for a removal color that's mostly dead in the mirror. I didn't lose a mirror match at the event."

Lam added his thoughts on how important the **Counterbalance**/Divining Top combo will be in the future: "Top/CB will be in all winning Threshold decks. Games two and three will just be a race to see who gets their combo down first."



Phan believes the Divining Top/Counterbalance combination has become the key to Threshold decks.

That wasn't the only card which made a difference, however. Said Phan "**Tarmogoyf** completely pushes Threshold over the top. I can now go 'aggro' against Goblins and if enough pressure is applied early gobbos must start blocking and can't mount a counter attack. I *strongly* believe that 'Goyf is here to stay.'"

It was Phan who had come to that conclusion for his "team" (which includes Olszewski and Rich Mattiuzzo, who Top 8ed the Vintage Championship this year), and Peter couldn't overstate the importance of his teammates' efforts in his success. "[My deck choice] was entirely based on what my teammates had suggested to me. They told me what kind of stuff I could expect to face."

The respect was mutual and Phan described Olszewski by saying "Peter is our resident genius. He'll take our results and decks and just win." That statement seems accurate when one considers Peter admitted he had done no testing for the Legacy tournament.

Vintage Championship: Masters at Work

Shifting to Vintage, our focus moves from the dominance of Canada to an all-American finals—and what a finals it was! Vintage standouts Rich Shay and Steve Menendian were the two players in the Top 8 playing Gro-A-Tog (GAT) and after hard-fought quarterfinal and semifinal matches they found themselves staring each other down for the title of champion. What did they think about playing one another?

"Exhilaration," said Menendian. "I have the utmost respect for Rich. Playing Rich in the finals was surreal; He is a phenomenally successful Vintage player."

Rich echoed similar sentiments saying "Steve is an excellent player and I am glad to have had him as my opponent in the finals of Vintage [Championship]. Before the match I told him that I hoped for three close games, regardless of the winner. I consider Steve a friend and am happy to see that he did well."

Vintage Championship Top 8 Profiles

Name: Alex Franson

Age: 19

Hometown: Oak Creek, Wisconsin

Occupation: Student/unemployed

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 6

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 1

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 0

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

Other previous Magic accomplishments: 5 Color Worlds Top 8, twice

What deck are you playing and why?

GWS Pitch Long with my own special twist...

What card is the most powerful in the format?

I would have to say **Black Lotus** because it won me the most games.


What deck is the most powerful in the format?

The one I'm playing.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

I looked up a decklist at 3 a.m. this morning with a cell phone. I didn't play a single game with the deck until Round 1.



Alex Franson, GWS Pitch Long		
2007 Vintage Championship Top 8		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
1 Island	1 Yawgmoth's Bargain	1 Hurkyl's Recall
1 Badlands	1 Chain of Vapor	1 Rebuild
1 Swamp	1 Hurkyl's Recall	1 Chain of Vapor
1 Tolarian Academy	4 Cabal Ritual	2 Empty the Warrens
2 Underground Sea	1 Black Lotus	2 Simian Spirit Guide
2 Polluted Delta	1 Lion's Eye Diamond	4 Extirpate
3 Flooded Strand	1 Sol Ring	4 Leyline of the Void
11 lands	2 Tendrils of Agony	
	4 Duress	15 sideboard cards
3 Street Wraith	1 Memory Jar	
3 creatures	1 Timetwister	
	1 Rebuild	
	1 Wheel of Fortune	
	4 Brainstorm	
	1 Mana Crypt	
	1 Mana Vault	
	1 Lotus Petal	
	1 Mox Ruby	
	1 Mox Pearl	
	1 Mox Emerald	
	1 Mox Jet	
	1 Mox Sapphire	
	1 Mystical Tutor	
	1 Vampiric Tutor	
	4 Dark Ritual	
	1 Tinker	
	1 Mind's Desire	
	2 Grim Tutor	
	1 Necropotence	
	1 Yawgmoth's Will	
	1 Ancestral Recall	
	1 Demonic Tutor	
	46 other spells	

Name: Rich Shay

Age: 26

Hometown: Norwood, Massachusetts

Occupation: Grad Student in Computer Science at Purdue

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 3

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 3 each

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: About 3 Pro Tours, 3 Nationals, 3 Grand Prix Day 2.

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: None

Other previous Magic accomplishments:

Rhode Island state champion, won Waterbury, 20th at Grand Prix–Philadelphia, around 12th at Grand Prix–New Jersey.

What deck are you playing and why?

Gro-a-Tog (GAT): It is consistent and powerful. It is strong against everything from degenerate combo to aggro. I am very happy **Gush** is unrestricted—it keeps the format safer from combo.

What card is the most powerful in the format?

Black Lotus

What deck is the most powerful in the format?

Flash has the most raw power. GAT is, I think, the best deck.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

Thanks to my teammates on Reflection for all their help preparing. New England has a wonderful Type 1 scene and I was fortunate to have played the format at many events this summer. The New England Vintage scene has great players, too numerous to name. Much thanks everyone.



Richard Shay, GAT		
2007 Vintage Championship Top 8		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
2 Island	1 Mox Sapphire	2 Leyline of Singularity
3 Underground Sea	1 Mox Emerald	4 Leyline of the Void
3 Tropical Island	1 Mox Jet	2 Smother
2 Polluted Delta	1 Black Lotus	1 Snuff Out
4 Flooded Strand	4 Brainstorm	3 Oxidize
1 Library of Alexandria	4 Duress	1 Hurkyl's Recall
15 lands	2 Opt	1 Brain Freeze
	4 Gush	1 Berserk
	4 Merchant Scroll	15 sideboard cards
2 Psychatog	1 Ancestral Recall	
3 Quirion Dryad	1 Time Walk	
5 creatures	1 Demonic Tutor	
	1 Mystical Tutor	
	1 Vampiric Tutor	
	1 Regrowth	
	4 Force of Will	
	2 Mana Drain	
	2 Misdirection	
	1 Rushing River	
	1 Cunning Wish	
	1 Yawgmoth's Will	
	1 Fastbond	
	40 other spells	

Name: Nick Calcaterra

Age: 18

Hometown: St. Louis, Missouri

Occupation: Freshman in college

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 1st time

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 1st time

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 0

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

Other previous Magic accomplishments: Top 16 Regionals



What deck are you playing and why?

Ichorid. The deck plays no power and was cheap to build. Although Leyline was probably a 4-of in 90 percent of the decks, it didn't scare me from playing it. However, it did scare everyone else so that loosened the pressure on Ichorid.

What card is the most powerful in the format?

Black Lotus - OBV

What deck is the most powerful in the format?

Flash – Fast, easy to play, and hard to disrupt. Being able to back up a turn 1 win with double counter backup is ridiculous.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

I goldfished a couple of times and went to a couple of tournaments. My friends at Team Ogre playtested with me a bit, and then made fun of me for picking a virtually suicide choice.

Nick Calcaterra, Ichorid		
2007 Vintage Championship Top 8		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Bazaar of Baghdad	4 Dread Return	4 Contagion
4 Dryad Arbor	4 Cabal Therapy	4 Reverent Silence
8 lands	4 Chalice of the Void	3 Emerald Charm
	4 Serum Powder	2 Taiga
2 Flame-Kin Zealot	4 Leyline of the Void	2 Ancient Grudge
4 Ichorid	4 Unmask	15 sideboard cards
4 Narcomoeba	4 Bridge from Below	
4 Stinkweed Imp	28 other spells	
4 Golgari Grave-Troll		
4 Golgari Thug		
2 Cephalid Sage		
24 creatures		

Name: Ray Robillard

Age: 26

Hometown: Waterbury, Connecticut

Occupation: Math Teacher/Department Head

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 4

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 4

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 1

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

Other previous Magic accomplishments:

Tournament Organizer of TMD and TML Open (Waterbury) Tournaments

What deck are you playing and why?

Staxless Stax. I have played this deck religiously since I created it two years ago. It is the best Workshop-based deck in Vintage.

What card is the most powerful in the format?

Jagged Poppet, obviously

What deck is the most powerful in the format?

Tie: Staxless Stax and The Mountains Win Again

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

Playing in local events (Myriad Games, ELD's Mox events, Hadley, etc.). Playtesting with Team TPS.



Raymond Robillard, Staxless Stax		
2007 Vintage Championship Top 8		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Mishra's Workshop	1 Mox Jet	1 Orb of Dreams
4 Wasteland	1 Mox Ruby	2 Eon Hub
2 Gemstone Mine	1 Mox Pearl	1 Shattering Spree
4 City of Brass	1 Mox Emerald	1 Darkblast
1 Tolarian Academy	1 Mox Sapphire	4 Leyline of the Void
1 Bazaar of Baghdad	1 Black Lotus	1 Jester's Cap

1 Barbarian Ring	1 Sol Ring	2 Red Elemental Blast
1 Strip Mine	1 Mana Crypt	2 Chalice of the Void
<hr/>		
18 lands	1 Mana Vault	1 Triskelion
<hr/>		
4 Goblin Welder	2 Coalition Relic	15 sideboard cards
2 Gorilla Shaman	4 Sphere of Resistance	
1 Sundering Titan	3 Crucible of Worlds	
1 Triskelion	2 Chalice of the Void	
<hr/>		
8 creatures	2 Sensei's Divining Top	
	2 Powder Keg	
	1 Time Walk	
	1 Ancestral Recall	
	1 Balance	
	1 Tinker	
	1 Crop Rotation	
	1 Demonic Tutor	
	1 Vampiric Tutor	
	1 Memory Jar	
	1 Trinisphere	
	1 Orb of Dreams	
	34 other spells	

Name: Vincent Forino

Age: 30

Hometown: New York

Occupation: International Real Estate Agent

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 2

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 2

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 0 (never entered a Pro Tour)

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: I only play Vintage

Other previous Magic accomplishments:

Top 16 about every Vintage event I've been to. Second place in a 700 person tournament 10+ years ago.

What deck are you playing and why?

FSB: Forino Sui Black or as Josh Meckes likes to call it "Ghetto Storm."

What card is the most powerful in the format?

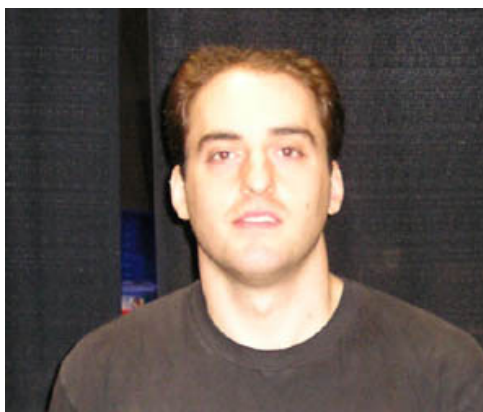
Black Lotus

What deck is the most powerful in the format?

No one deck is best; as for most powerful probably Flash.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

Praying – to God goes all the glory. I also played with my NY crew: Roland, Raffaele F. Josh Meckes.



Vincent Forino, Suicide Black			
2007 Vintage Championship Top 8			
Main Deck	Sideboard		
60 cards			
3 Bloodstained Mire	2 Extirpate	4 Leyline of the Void	
3 Polluted Delta	1 Echoing Truth	1 Wasteland	
4 Swamp	1 Yawgmoth's Will	1 Hurkyl's Recall	
2 Underground Sea	4 Cabal Therapy	1 Chain of Vapor	
1 Strip Mine	4 Duress	3 Null Rod	
1 Wasteland	3 Night's Whisper	2 Massacre	
2 Bazaar of Baghdad	3 Tendrils of Agony	1 Darkblast	
1 Library of Alexandria	1 Demonic Consultation	2 Ill-Gotten Gains	
1 Cabal Pit	1 Necropotence	<hr/>	
18 lands			
	3 Grim Tutor	15 sideboard cards	
	1 Demonic Tutor		
	1 Ancestral Recall		
	1 Vampiric Tutor		
4 Dark Confidant	4 Dark Ritual		
<hr/>			
4 creatures	1 Mox Sapphire		
	1 Lotus Petal		
	1 Black Lotus		

4 Cabal Ritual
 1 Mox Jet
 38 other spells

Name: Steve Conway
Age: 24
Hometown: Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Occupation: Feng Shui Consultant

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 1st year attending, 2nd day playing

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: I have played in Legacy Championships

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: Never played in one

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

Other previous Magic accomplishments:
 Did OK in Legacy tournament Friday.

What deck are you playing and why?
 Supreme Stax because Ryan Trepanier told me to play it.

What card is the most powerful in the format?
 Your choice.

What deck is the most powerful in the format?
 Obviously mine

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?
 Team Supreme testing at Penny Lane without Ryan Trepanier



Steve Conway, Supreme Stax		
2007 Vintage Championship Top 8		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
4 Mishra's Workshop	1 Mox Jet	2 Powder Keg
4 Gemstone Mine	1 Mox Ruby	1 Ensnaring Bridge
4 City of Brass	1 Mox Pearl	2 Chalice of the Void
4 Wasteland	1 Mox Emerald	3 Ancient Grudge
1 Strip Mine	1 Mox Sapphire	1 Sphere of Resistance
1 Tolarian Academy	1 Black Lotus	2 Razormane Masticore
1 Bazaar of Baghdad	1 Sol Ring	4 Leyline of the Void
19 lands	1 Mana Vault	
	1 Mana Crypt	15 sideboard cards
	1 Crop Rotation	
4 Goblin Welder	1 Balance	
1 Gorilla Shaman	1 Ancestral Recall	
1 Duplicant	1 Tinker	
1 Triskelion	1 In the Eye of Chaos	
1 Sundering Titan	1 Vampiric Tutor	
8 creatures	1 Demonic Tutor	
	1 Imperial Seal	
	3 Smokestack	
	3 Crucible of Worlds	
	1 Trinsphere	
	3 Sphere of Resistance	
	4 Tangle Wire	
	1 Coalition Relic	
	1 Memory Jar	
	33 other spells	

Name: Richard Mattiuzzo
Age: 27
Hometown: Mississauga

Occupation: IT Industry

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 3

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 3 Vintage, 1 Legacy

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 0

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

What deck are you playing and why?

Landstill. It's exciting to play because every game is a struggle and it is a highly interactive deck.

What card is the most powerful in the format?

There are many powerful cards in Vintage. If I had to choose I'd say **Black Lotus**.

What deck is the most powerful in the format?

There is no one deck that stands above all others. Currently GAT is the most powerful, consistent deck. However, Flash is most powerful in terms of raw power.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

I've been playing Vintage for 10 years, but I didn't do anything to specifically prepare for this event. Much of my success can be attributed to my teammates (Lam Phan, Peter Olszewki) for their insight on improving my gameplay.



Richard Mattiuzzo, Landstill		
2007 Vintage Championship Top 8		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
4 Volcanic Island	4 Force of Will	4 Chalice of the Void
4 Wasteland	4 Mana Drain	3 Red Elemental Blast
4 Mishra's Factory	4 Stifle	2 Pyroblast
3 Faerie Conclave	3 Misdirection	3 Rack and Ruin
2 Flooded Strand	4 Standstill	3 Threads of Disloyalty
2 Polluted Delta	4 Fire // Ice	
2 Island	3 Chain of Vapor	15 sideboard cards
2 Steam Vents	4 Null Rod	
1 Strip Mine	1 Ancestral Recall	
1 Library of Alexandria	1 Time Walk	
	1 Black Lotus	
25 lands	1 Mox Sapphire	
	1 Crucible of Worlds	
0 creatures	35 other spells	

Name: Stephen Menendian

Age: 27

Hometown: Columbus, Ohio

Occupation: Attorney

Number of Times Attending Gen Con: 4

Number of Times Playing Vintage and/or Legacy Championships: 4

Number of Times Playing on the Pro Tour/Nationals/Grand Prix Day 2: 1

Number of GP/PT Top 8s: 0

Other previous Magic accomplishments:

Top 32 at Grand Prix-Columbus, Top 8 in Vintage champs in 2004, at least 10 Starcitygames Power 9 Top 8s, Starcity columnist since 2002

What deck are you playing and why?

I helped develop Gro-a-Tog in 2003 and helped push **Gush** towards destruction.

What card is the most powerful in the format?

Yawgmoth's Will followed by **Black Lotus** and **Ancestral Recall**.


What deck is the most powerful in the format?

Flash is interesting in one sense; GAT is most powerful in that it is the best deck.

How did you prepare for the event? Who did you prepare with?

Testing with teammates and in tournaments



Steve Menendian, GAT		
2007 Vintage Championship Top 8		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
60 cards		
3 Flooded Strand	4 Brainstorm	2 Pithing Needle
3 Polluted Delta	4 Gush	1 Island
1 Island	4 Duress	3 Yixlid Jailer
1 Volcanic Island	4 Merchant Scroll	1 Ancient Grudge
2 Tropical Island	4 Force of Will	1 Berserk
3 Underground Sea	2 Mana Drain	1 Fire // Ice
1 Library of Alexandria	2 Misdirection	1 Oxidize
14 lands	1 Ancestral Recall	2 Pyroblast
	1 Time Walk	1 Rack and Ruin
4 Quirion Dryad	1 Mystical Tutor	1 Red Elemental Blast
1 Psychatog	1 Demonic Tutor	1 Rushing River
5 creatures	1 Yawgmoth's Will	
	1 Fastbond	15 sideboard cards
	1 Cunning Wish	
	3 Opt	
	1 Red Elemental Blast	
	1 Vampiric Tutor	
	1 Mox Jet	
	1 Mox Ruby	
	1 Mox Emerald	
	1 Mox Sapphire	
	1 Black Lotus	
	41 other spells	

It was Menendian who took the mirror match and walked away the champion, practically a fairy tale ending for the Vintage poster boy (you can read a recap of their final match [here](#)). With his work on Starcitygames highlighting the format, Steve has not only given a face to the world of Classic play but to himself as well. That hard work paid off with his win at the Vintage Championship, which was followed the next week with the announcement that he was named the R&D selection to the 2007 Magic Invitational.

Shay is no slouch himself. An occasional Starcitygames contributor as well Shay has seen action at the Pro Tour and Grand Prix levels. He's also seen some success on the premier Vintage leagues across the country having won both a Waterbury and Starcity Power 9 tournament. Still, that's not what he credits as being the most important feather in his cap.

"None of these accomplishments has given me more joy than being a part of the Vintage community," Shay said. "I know that other formats have larger events with larger prizes but Pro Tours and Nationals are never as enjoyable as the much smaller high-level Vintage events."

Sentimental notions aside, we are talking about a championship for the most potentially broken format in **Magic: The Gathering**, and more than a few eyebrows



Menendian, left, and Shay agreed to share the prize.

were raised with the recent un-restricting of **Gush**. Had either Steve or Ray considered playing something else

prior to the tournament?

"Gush was the key engine of the most dominant Vintage deck of the last five years," said Steve. "How could you *not* play that deck again?"

Added Rich: "Gush is a tremendous card in Vintage. It's free card draw! For me the un-restriction of Gush brought back a deck I enjoyed playing many years ago."

With the success of the two players playing the deck in the Top 8, did either feel it should return to the Restricted list? To that end Rich responded by saying "Gush should not be restricted. I commend the foresight Wizards showed in unrestricting it. Gush is a very strong card, but it's strong in the same way that Force of Will is strong: its very strength helps to maintain balance in the format. Using Gush to fuel a combo deck has not seen success; rather, Gush has seen play in control decks—the very sorts of decks which help to keep combo in check."

Menendian agreed, though for different reasons saying "Nothing should be done [to Gush] right now. Although Gush is broken, the Gush decks haven't picked up like I thought they would. So far GAT isn't very popular. It's being played by a relatively small population of people—roughly 10 percent of Vintage tournament populations—but it's over-represented in Top 8s. Until GAT becomes more heavily played, it's hard to justify restriction."

Both players expressed some surprise at a few of the decks in the Top 8.

"The Top 8 deck which surprised me the most was Ichorid," Shay said. "Ichorid is an inexpensive and very powerful deck but is also a deck that can be directly attacked through specific sideboard choices. There was a time earlier this summer where there were so many sideboard cards dedicated to stopping Ichorid that playing it was a bad idea."

Steve was caught off guard by the diversity of the Top 8. "I expected three GATs, two Flash decks, two Stax decks, and one 'other.' Suicide Black in the Top 4? That was pretty shocking."

The Championship itself was a fan-filled affair despite being played out late into the night. Throngs of well-wishers crowded around to get a look at two of the biggest names from their community battle head-to-head, and both finalists—demonstrating a mentality that might help to explain why they have so many fans to begin with—took the time to shake hands with each member of the crowd afterwards. Their prize, an oversized alternative art Mox Jet which the two had agreed to jointly own regardless of who won, was even left on display for onlookers to see for themselves, photograph, and measure for scale.

"The Vintage community is vibrant, intelligent, and active," Steve explained. "They love playing Vintage because it's such a fun format. The interactions are wild and amazing. In what other format is every major deck so unique and so fun to play? It's like sanctioned Type Four."

Rich echoed Steve's sentiments. "The Vintage community is amazing. The tournaments are friendly and while everyone is trying to win, victory is not placed above good sportsmanship. To me, this is the essence of what a good game is – an excuse to hang out with some great people."

With such vibrant support from their very active community, what did the title of 'Vintage Champion' mean to Rich? "I didn't play in the event because I cared about the booster packs. I wanted the title."

He added, pejoratively, "However, Steve is certainly an excellent and deserving champion. As we Red Sox fans so often must do, I'll just console myself that there's always next year."

Steve also had some thoughts on what it meant to be a Vintage Champion.

"Going in I guess it didn't really mean as much, probably because I just imagined it was beyond my reach. Too many things have to fall into place to get the title. I am proud to hold the title."

Whether it was a horde of Canadian players stealing the thunder at the Legacy Championship or two of the Vintage game's biggest stars taking center stage for the Vintage title, this year's Gen Con events were certainly ones for the history books. Time will tell if we hear from Team Supreme, Lam Phan, Peter Olszewski, Rich Shay, or Steve Menendian again but judging by their performances this year I would say it's a solid bet that we will...

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.



"I expected three GATs, two Flash decks, two Stax decks, and one 'other.' Suicide Black in the Top 4? That was pretty shocking."– Steve Menendian, on the Vintage Top 8



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