

RESTRICT

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Chapter 1

RESTRICT

1.1 Banned & Restricted Cards - Table of Contents

The DC Banned and Restricted fact sheet

Introduction

Restricted Cards

Banned Cards

Ante Cards

1.2 Introduction

Why are certain cards restricted or banned ?

As the number of cards on the Restricted and Banned lists for Duelists' Convocation's tournament rules continues to grow, so do the questions regarding why individual cards appear on these lists. Though most reasons are obvious, many people are unaware of the more specific reasons why cards become restricted or banned. There are a number of signs that the DC looks for when deciding to restrict or ban a given card.

The most obvious sign is that the card appears as a central theme of a winning tourney deck. When all tournament decks begin to look alike, it's time for a change.

Other cards are so useful that there is no reason not to include them in any deck. Often, powerful artifacts are restricted for this reason, as they can be integrated into any kind of deck. The Moxes and Black Lotus are examples of these kind of cards, and Black Vise is a recent addition to the Restricted list due to this problem.

Of course, all cards dealing with ante have been banned, as official constructed-deck tournaments are never played for ante. These are good examples of cards that are prohibited in tournaments not because they are spoilers, but rather because they are not appropriate for tournament-style play. Other cards also fall into this category, Sharazad, for example.

Most "retrieval" cards have found their way onto the Restricted list as well. Themselves rather harmless, they allow for the reuse of the spoilers, thus justifying their restriction. In deck-construction systems where the spoilers are completely banned, sometimes the retrieval cards are left unrestricted.

A number of the cards on the Restricted and Banned lists don't fall into any particular category. They are cards that, for whatever reason, are just too powerful either alone or in combination with one or more other cards.

As new cards are created, the list will continue to grow, though with care in card design it will grow more slowly than it has in the past. Ante cards aside, only two cards from the last four expansions have had to be restricted. This has been by design, and hopefully future expansions will fare as well.

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1.3 Restricted Cards

Restricted Cards

Ancestral Recall
Balance
Berserk
Black Lotus
Black Vise
Braingeyser
Candelabra of Tawnos
Copy Artifact
Demonic Tutor
Fastbond
Feldon's Cane

Fork
Hymn to Tourach
Ivory Tower
Land Tax
Library of Alexandria
Maze of Ith
Mirror Universe
Mishra's Workshop
Mox Emerald
Mox Jet
Mox Pearl
Mox Ruby
Mox Sapphire
Recall
Regrowth
Sol Ring
Strip Mine
Timetwister
Time Walk
Underworld Dreams
Wheel of Fortune
Zuran Orb

Due to recent changes (June 1997) in the tournament formats it's ↔ almost not possible to keep track of all restricted/banned cards in every format. In order to get a complete list I suggest you take a look at the rulings for tournaments in the General Rulings.

1.4 Banned Cards

Banned Cards

Channel

Chaos Orb

Divine Intervention

Falling Star

Mind Twist

Sharazad

Above mentioned cards are always BANNED from any tournament.

1.5 Ante Cards

Ante Cards

Amulet of Quoz

Bronze Tablet

Contract from Below

Darkpact

Demonic Attorney

Jeweled Bird

Rebirth

Tempest Efreet

Timmerian Fiends

Above mentioned cards are normally always BANNED from any tournament, ↔
except for Seal Deck tournaments.

1.6 Ancestral Recall

Ancestral Recall

The ability to draw cards has proved to be one of the most powerful effects in Magic, and Ancestral Recall allows its caster to draw cards at a much lower cost than any other spell or

effect. Therefor it has way too much firepower for its cost.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.7 Balance

Balance

Balance decks began dominating tournaments in mid-1995 to such an extent that the card had to be restricted. A player could obliterate his or her own resources (usually sacrificing them for gain) and then cast Balance to make the opponent pay for the very temporary advantage. As a result, good tourney decks had to prepare to play against Balance. Also, for its mass effect, it is way too cheap.

Interesting note: It took players over a year to figure out how to break this card, proving that restriction rests on the players' actions. Cards are restricted only when players demonstrate the necessity of doing so.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.8 Berserk

Berserk

Berserk's effect of doubling a creature's power quickly proved to be too powerful when played in multiples of two or more. Combined in a deck with Fork, Berserk was one of the first cards in Magic to be recognized as degenerate.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.9 Black Lotus

Black Lotus

Any time a card produces more mana than is required to bring it into play, there is an opportunity for abuse, and the cheaper that card is to cast, the greater that opportunity. In no other case is this more apparent than with Black Lotus. This was the main ingredient in many of Magic's original first-turn kill decks, and it is still a staple card for all people who have one to play with.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.10 Black Vise

Black Vise

Black Vise is a card so generally effective that many tournament players were willing to include it in their decks regardless of what the deck's theme or purpose was. The damage it could potentially inflict if played on the first turn was too attractive to ignore. Since all decks had to plan for them, they completely dominated the Type II tournament landscape.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.11 Braingeyser

Braingeyser

Although less powerful than Ancstral Recall, Braingeyser's inexpensive card-drawing ability landed it on the restricted list as well.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.12 Candelabra of Tawnos

Candelabra of Tawnos

Sharp Magic players quickly realized the vast amounts of mana that could be produced with multiple Candelabras and means of producing more than one mana per land (Urza's lands, Mana Flare) in play.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.13 Copy Artifact

Copy Artifact

Not so much a spoiler by itself, Copy Artifact allows for multiples of other restricted cards. Creature copiers, like Clone and Vesuvan Doppelganger, aren't restricted because the costs of the copies are relatively large. Copy Artifact is cheap compared to many of its potential targets.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted

Rulings

1.14 Demonic Tutor

Demonic Tutor

This is often the best card in your deck, at any time, for whatever situation you might be in. It makes dangerous combos too easy to set up.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.15 Fastbond

Fastbond

Fastbond (Revised) has occupied a spot on the DCI's "most-watched" list for some time. Fastbond is similar to Channel in its ability to create grossly overpowered,

game-winning combinations. This is most obvious when Fastbond is used in conjunction with Storm Cauldron, effectively creating a Channel for colored mana, with preventable damage.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.16 Feldon's Cane

Feldon's Cane

In essence a retrieval card, Feldon's Cane allows other spoilers to be used multiple times by taking them out of the graveyard and putting them back into the library. The only reason the Cane itself is restricted is to keep those other spoilers out of play once they've been used.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted

Rulings

1.17 Fork

Fork

In addition to being overly complicated, Fork can, like Copy Artifact, duplicate spoilers very cheaply (Time Walk, Ancestral Recall, Demonic Tutor and Berserk are favorites), to the detriment of the game.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted

Rulings

1.18 Hymn to Tourach

Hymn to Tourach

Hymn to Tourach from Fallen Empires has been the center of more controversy than any other single card throughout the later half of the 1995-96 tournament season. Competitors began to suggest its restriction shortly after the first Pro Tour event in New York, primarily because the card was seen by many as the cornerstone of the popular and successful "Necro" deck. Many DCI members expected its restriction on June 1 but were surprised

when the DCI decided to restrict Land Tax but not Hymn to Tourach.

The DCI explained that, at that time, it lacked sufficient data on Hymn's true influence in the Standard (Type II) tournament environment. Necro decks had barely started to dominate tournaments, and Alliances had not yet been released, giving rise to the possibility that new card combinations and deck designs would emerge to challenge Necro decks. Moreover, the actual cause of Necro's success was still open to speculation: Some competitors claimed it was the result of several other cards, while others theorized that it was due to the sheer number of competitors (particularly top-ranked players) who used the deck.

The conclusion of the 1995-96 season and the release of Alliances gives the DCI more information on which to base a decision. Hymn to Tourach's impact is more readily visible: One need only recall the semifinal match at the 1996 U.S. Nationals, between Dennis Bentley and Matthew Place to witness the Hymn's early game-swing advantage, as well as its strong ability to stifle new deck-construction ideas.

Not banned or restricted in any of the older formats.

Card Information

1.19 Ivory Tower

Ivory Tower

The amount of life that one Ivory Tower can generate is awesome, and this can lead to exceptionally long games, an unsuitable situation in tournament play. Without restriction of Ivory Tower, the problem is extended fourfold.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.20 Land Tax

Land Tax

The ability to gain a three-card advantage every turn while simultaneously thinning out your deck is just too good. And Land Tax has already created major design constraints, forcing the removal of a card (Time Arc) from the Alliances set.

Not banned or restricted in any of the older formats.

Rulings

1.21 Library of Alexandria

Library of Alexandria

Again, the ability to draw a card proves too powerful an effect to be left unrestricted. Even with the restriction of only drawing cards when you have exactly seven, the Library's gift of cards for no cost has kept it on the Restricted list for nearly its entire existence.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.22 Maze of Ith

Maze of Ith

One of the most useful defensive cards in the game, Maze of Ith has untap and damage-prevention effects that can be the centerpiece for a number of powerful combinations. Mostly however, it is its ability to nullify attackers at no cost that puts it on the list.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.23 Mirror Universe

Mirror Universe

Trading lives with your opponent is so amazingly useful that any more than one Mirror Universe in a deck makes a player almost unbeatable. It's a fairly expensive card to cast, but as it is normally only useful towards the end of a game (often as the coup de grace), the cost is hardly a factor.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.24 Mishra's Workshop

Mishra's Workshop

Any land that can create more than one mana, even with a restriction, can be exploited. Unrestricted, the Workshop can create incredibly fast artifact decks. Players can get unrestricted artifacts (like Juggernaut) into play far too quickly.

Restricted in Classic

Banned in Classic-Restricted

Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.25 Mox Emerald

Mox Emerald

Like Black Lotus, the Mox Emerald impact the game by providing sources of mana, at no cost, that are not restricted by the normal frameworks governing the pace of the game, i.e., unlike land, you can put Moxes into play as quickly as you get them. This can speed up a deck sufficiently to give the edge to the person with the most Moxes, or, even with Moxes restricted, to the person who draws the most Moxes early. Moxes circumvent the whole design of land playing and break part of the game.

Restricted in Classic

Banned in Classic-Restricted

Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.26 Mox Jet

Mox Jet

Like Black Lotus, the Mox Jet impact the game by providing sources of mana, at no cost, that are not restricted by the normal frameworks governing the pace of the game, i.e., unlike land, you can put Moxes into play as quickly as you get them. This can speed up a deck sufficiently to give the edge to the person with the most Moxes, or, even with Moxes restricted, to the person who draws the most Moxes early. Moxes circumvent the whole design of land playing and break part of the game.

Restricted in Classic

Banned in Classic-Restricted

Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.27 Mox Pearl

Mox Pearl

Like Black Lotus, the Mox Pearl impact the game by providing sources of mana, at no cost, that are not restricted by the normal frameworks governing the pace of the game, i.e., unlike land, you can put Moxes into play as quickly as you get them. This can speed up a deck sufficiently to give the edge to the person with the most Moxes, or, even with Moxes restricted, to the person who draws the most Moxes early. Moxes circumvent the whole design of land playing and break part of the game.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.28 Mox Ruby

Mox Ruby

Like Black Lotus, the Mox Ruby impact the game by providing sources of mana, at no cost, that are not restricted by the normal frameworks governing the pace of the game, i.e., unlike land, you can put Moxes into play as quickly as you get them. This can speed up a deck sufficiently to give the edge to the person with the most Moxes, or, even with Moxes restricted, to the person who draws the most Moxes early. Moxes circumvent the whole design of land playing and break part of the game.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.29 Mox Sapphire

Mox Sapphire

Like Black Lotus, the Mox Sapphire impact the game by providing sources of mana, at no cost, that are not restricted by the normal frameworks governing the pace of the game, i.e., unlike land, you can put Moxes into play as quickly as you get them. This can speed up a deck sufficiently to give the edge to the person with the most Moxes, or, even with Moxes restricted, to

the person who draws the most Moxes early. Moxes circumvent the whole design of land playing and break part of the game.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.30 Recall

Recall

A retrieval card, Recall is restricted less for what it does than for what it can bring back into play. Each Recall in your deck allows for another use of your most powerful cards. A Regrowth for multiple cards !

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted

Rulings

1.31 Regrowth

Regrowth

Another retrieval card, Regrowth is restricted for the same reason as Recall.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.32 Sol Ring

Sol Ring

A victim of its own efficiency, Sol Ring is restricted along with the Moxes, for producing more mana than it takes to cast. Its presence in almost every deck that allows it is a dead giveaway of its power.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.33 r_strip

Strip Mine

Restricting Strip Mine (Fourth Edition) echoes the DCI's Black Vise decision earlier this year: Strip Mine is a card so generally effective that an overwhelming majority of tournament players decide to include it in their decks, regardless of the deck's theme or purpose. Its tremendous ability to provide an early game swing-not to mention the fact that it cannot be countered-makes the card too attractive to ignore.

Banned in Classic-Restricted

Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.34 Timetwister

Timetwister

Timetwister combines the effects of a retrieval card with the awesome ability to fill your hand. It affects all players, but it still gives the caster a huge advantage. Even restricted, Timetwister shows up as the centerpiece of some decks.

Restricted in Classic

Banned in Classic-Restricted

Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.35 Time Walk

Time Walk

In early playtest versions of Magic, Time Walk was a common card. That sure didn't last! Even limited to one per deck, the ability to take an additional turn on demand is one of the most powerful effects in the game. Combining Time Walk with Fork to get multiple turns at once is also a popular (and usually game-winning) combination.

Restricted in Classic

Banned in Classic-Restricted

Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.36 Underworld Dreams

Underworld Dreams

Dealing damage for each card your opponent draws is good by itself, but in multiples it is devastating. If accompanied by Howling Mine and other cheap "force your opponent to draw" type cards, Underworld Dreams can prove nearly unbeatable.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.37 Wheel of Fortune

Wheel of Fortune

As with Timetwister, drawing cards equals restrictio. Even though Wheel of Fortune affects everyone, the caster gains huge advantage in casting it when it benefits him or her the most.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.38 Zuran Orb

Zuran Orb

Much like Ivory Tower's ability, the Zuran Orb's ability to create a lot of life makes tournament games drag on far longer than is acceptable. The Orb was so generally useful that two or three were immediately added to most winning tournament decks. Even restricted, it still finds its way into most tourney decks, extending many games, especially Type I duels.

Restricted in Classic
Banned in Classic-Restricted
Banned in Extended

Rulings

1.39 Channel

Channel

A long-time resident of the Restricted list, Channel was added to the Banned list in November 1995. As one-half of the instant-win combo Channel-Fireball, it turned the game into a simplistic "Whoever draws their Channel first wins" affair. Although Channel has other uses, the potential for abuse with direct-damage spells is too great to allow the card to remain a part of tournament play.

Rulings

1.40 Chaos Orb

Chaos Orb

Banned less for what it does than for how it does it, Chaos Orb's unusual mechanic of being "flipped" onto the playing area caused so much trouble that the card had to be banned. Issues ranging from what exactly "flip" means, to how large the playing area needs can be, to what things could be used to represent counters, caused constant conflicts regarding the card's use. Chaos Orb was moved from the Restricted list to the Banned list in November 1995.

Rulings

1.41 Divine Intervention

Divine Intervention

Draws are traditionally undesirable in competitive events, and Divine Intervention's sole effect is to create them. Also, in a tournament setting a single card should not have such a dramatic influence on the outcome of the game.

Rulings

1.42 Falling Star

Falling Star

Though generally less useful than Chaos Orb, Falling Star still suffers from most of its big brother's drawbacks. It was banned in November 1995.

Rulings

1.43 Mind Twist

Mind Twist

This card was banned primarily because of the major swing it causes in early game play. As with effects that allow a player to draw extra cards, hand-destruction can be overly disruptive. A player on the Net described it like this: "Mind Twist is just like Channel, only with Mind Twist, it takes you a number of turns before you realize that it killed you."

Rulings

1.44 Sharazad

Sharazad

One of the most unique cards in the game of Magic, Sharazad isn't banned because of what it does but because of how long it takes to play it. There is seldom time in a tournament round to resolve a Sharazad subgame, and allowing this card would result in an unacceptable number of draws.

Rulings

1.45 Amulet of Quoz

Amulet of Quoz

Type = Artifact

Text: Remove Amulet of Quoz from your deck before playing if you are not playing for ante.
<OT>: Sacrifice Amulet of Quoz. Flip a coin; target opponent calls heads or tails while coin is in the air. If the flip ends up in your favor, that opponent loses the game. Otherwise, you lose the game. Effects that prevent or redirect damage cannot be used to prevent this loss of life. Use this ability only during your upkeep. The opponent may ante an additional card to counter this effect.

Rulings

1.46 Bronze Tablet

Bronze Tablet

Type = Artifact

Text: Comes into play tapped.

<4T>: Remove Bronze Tablet and target card opponent owns from the game. You become owner of opponent's card and opponent becomes owner of Bronze Tablet. Opponent may prevent this exchange by paying 10 life; if he or she does so, destroy Bronze Tablet. Effects that prevent or redirect damage cannot be used to counter this loss of life. Play this ability as an interrupt. Remove Bronze Tablet from your deck before playing if not playing for ante.

Rulings

1.47 Contract from Below

Contract from Below

Type = Sorcery

Text: Discard your current hand and draw eight new cards, adding the first drawn to your ante. Remove this card from your deck before playing if you are not playing for ante.

Rulings

1.48 Darkpact

Darkpact

Type = Sorcery

Text: Swap top card of your library with either card of the ante; this swap is permanent. You must have a card in your library to cast this spell. Remove this card from your deck before playing if you are not playing for ante.

Rulings

1.49 Demonic Attorney

Demonic Attorney

Type = Sorcery

Text: If opponent doesn't concede the game immediately, each player must ante an additional card from the top of his or her library. Remove this card from your deck before playing if you are not playing for ante.

Rulings

1.50 Jeweled Bird

Jeweled Bird

Type = Artifact

Text: Remove Jeweled Bird from your deck before playing if not playing for ante.

<T>: Draw a card. Put your contribution to the ante into your graveyard and replace it with Jeweled Bird.

Rulings

1.51 Rebirth

Rebirth

Type = Sorcery

Text: Each player may be healed to 20 life. Any player choosing to be so healed antes an additional card from the top of his or her library. Remove Rebirth from your deck before playing if not playing for ante.

NO RULINGS

1.52 Tempest Efreet

Tempest Efreet

Type = Summon Efreet

Text: <T>: Choose a card at random from target opponent's hand and put it in yours. Bury Tempest Efreet in opponent's graveyard. The change in ownership is permanent. Play this ability as an interrupt. Before you choose the card to be switched, the opponent may prevent effect by paying 10 life or conceding game; if this is done, bury Tempest Efreet. Effects that prevent or redirect damage cannot be used to counter this loss of life. Remove Tempest Efreet from your deck before playing if not playing for ante.

Rulings

1.53 Timmerian Fiends

Timmerian Fiends

Type = Summon Fiends

Text: Remove Timmerian Fiends from your deck before playing if not playing for ante.
<BBB>: Sacrifice Timmerian Fiends to bury target artifact that any opponent owns in your graveyard. Put Timmerian Fiends into that opponent's graveyard. This change in ownership is permanent. The opponent may ante an additional card to counter this effect.

Rulings
