

the Force was removed, I had spent 10 mana on it (2 to play it and 8 for the upkeep). In the meantime, while I was building up resources to play my game-winning monster that never actually won me any games, I was getting slapped around by efficient pipsqueaks like Black Knight and Savannah Lions. You can argue that Force of Nature, for all its brawn, was never a tremendously good creature, but the same fate of Counterspell, Terror, or some other cheap solution befell the Force's hefty frat brothers as well. The time and mana investment required by these creatures wasn't worth it when the countermeasures were so simple to acquire and play.



Now, the mismatch of cool behemoth vs. efficient removal didn't happen in every game. But it occurred frequently when Timmy played Spike, and that match-up happens all the time in casual play. Timmy would either have to abandon his beloved giants or grow discouraged. The slaughter of oversized creatures happened less frequently in tournaments because the percentage of Spikes there is much higher and the number of Timmys is correspondingly lower. There have been exceptions throughout the years, of course. Some environments encouraged giant monsters to make guest appearances in top-tier decks, but even then the creatures were rarely played as intended. They were tinkered out with Tinker, reanimated with Reanimate, or sneaked out for an attack with Sneak Attack. Tapping a lot of mana for a huge creature, letting it sit around for a while, and attacking with it the following turn has rarely been a tournament-winning strategy.

How Dinosaurs Were Resurrected

R&D had been noticing this for a long time. They always included giant creatures to appeal to Timmy, but they never really took those creations that seriously. That changed with the *Onslaught* set. The pit fighter Legends were intentionally undercosted at 6 mana. Countermagic was weakened. Bounce was nearly nonexistent. The most efficient black removal spell, Smother, was designed to kill off tournament weenies (Psychatog and Wild Mongrel) and thus promote fatties. The *Legions* set only upped the creature-oriented stakes. The results were seen at Pro Tour - Venice when, facing an *Onslaught* Block Constructed environment, the Spikes were all suddenly reborn as Timmys. Cards you'd expect to see flying back and forth across your dining room table (Silvos! Akroma! Rorix! Kilnmouth Dragon!) were the spotlight of a premier tournament. And R&D wasn't done.



The *Scourge* set has a simple message: Play with huge creatures! Revert to when you just discovered **Magic** and you were still a Timmy! (Or reward yourself for staying a Timmy!) Look at Krosan Drover again. When you remove the "expensive" part from a big, expensive creature, all that's left is the "big" part. So put on your smashin' gloves and drove some fat critters.

Burden of Proof

Both of today's decks are going to have three things in common: Krosan Drover (duh), Wirewood Herald (to fetch the Drover), and Krosan Tusker (to fetch some cards or smash some face). After that, there's some open space. The first deck is packed with so many ideas that it's not all that good. (That's just what you want to hear from a supposed deckbuilding specialist, right?) Hey, I have only a limited amount of space to cram my thoughts into, and I figure the more ideas I share, the better. You can look at the deck, decide what you like about it, and rebuild it with a focus on just those parts.

My initial idea was to take advantage of Beast of Burden. It's not so hot at 6 mana, but 4 mana is a lot more reasonable. To pump it up, you need lots of creatures, and that's what Symbiotic Beast (when eaten by Wayward Angel) and Nut Collector provide. All of those creatures cost the magic number of 6 mana, and Mirari's Wake helps pay for them if you don't have a Drover while it boosts the Insects and Squirrels. Silver Seraph provides an even bigger boost if you get to threshold, and Kamahl can make more creatures for the Beast of Burden and give your weenie swarm +3/+3.

Droverdrive

Main Deck
60 cards

2 Brushland	3 Beast of Burden	1 Akroma's Vengeance
9 Forest	3 Elvish Aberration	2 Mirari's Wake
8 Plains	2 Kamahl, Fist of Krosa	2 Squirrel Nest
2 Secluded Steppe	4 Krosan Drover	-----
3 Windswept Heath	4 Krosan Tusker	5 other spells
-----	2 Nut Collector	
24 lands	1 Phantom Nishoba	
	2 Silver Seraph	
	4 Symbiotic Beast	
	2 Wayward Angel	
	4 Wirewood Herald	

	31 creatures	

Back to the Suture

Let me be the first to suggest an unholy alliance between Sutured Ghoul and the huge new landcyclers Mark Rosewater previewed last week. Landcyclers can either come out cheaply with Krosan Drover in play, or they can cycle to get you a land and put themselves on the donor list to be Sutured Ghoul's spleen or pinky finger. I know a lot of the cards in this decklist won't have links up because the veil of secrecy hasn't been lifted yet . . . but it won't be long now.

Suture Fight

Main Deck

60 cards

11 Forest	2 Birds of Paradise	2 Dragon Wings
2 Grand Coliseum	2 Fierce Empath	2 Naturalize
4 Island	4 Krosan Drover	2 Smother
7 Swamp	4 Krosan Tusker	_____
_____	2 Primoc Escapee	6 other spells
24 lands	3 Shoreline Ranger	
	3 Sutured Ghoul	
	4 Twisted Abomination	
	2 Wirewood Guardian	
	4 Wirewood Herald	

	30 creatures	

I know there are a lot of Scourge cards in those decks, but come back and reread this article after Saturday's prerelease and all will be made clear.

There's a Beast deck just begging to be built around a discounted Feral Throwback, but Krosan Drover's role in that deck is probably better filled by another *Scourge* card that I can't spoil quite yet. Not to worry; you'll see it soon. Until next week, think big.

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