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# One for All



## An experiment in odd deck construction

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Monday, October 13, 2003

One of the important parts of design (and R&D in general) is to keep your mind sharp. To do this, we often like to do creative exercises that make us think of **Magic** in a different light. Today's column is one such creative exercise. Be warned that today's column is a bit of a departure from my normal columns. That said, I think you'll find it to be an interesting brain stretcher.

Okay, here we go. This exercise has a very odd deck construction:

- All decks must be exactly sixty cards.
- All decks may only use one card. That is it must have exactly sixty copies of the same card.

Hey, I said it was odd. The goal is to design as many decks as you can that can beat the control deck. The control deck is made up of sixty-five **Maros**. The deck needs to be able to win regardless of if it plays or draws.

Why sixty-five cards? When I first started this puzzle, I made the control deck sixty cards. When I asked Richard Garfield if he could add any decks I didn't think of, he said, "All of them. If you play." So I changed the control deck to sixty-five cards. Decking is allowed but it has to be a result of your deck doing something to deck them.

Why sixty-five **Maros**? Well, originally I was going to make it sixty-five plains but there are a few cards (such as *Mercadian Masques'* *Cho-Arrim Legate*) that could win if the opponent had a plains in play so I had to change it. I was planning on making the deck sixty-five blank cards, but over lunch one day, Aaron Forsythe suggested I make them **Maros**. Who am I to turn down a great idea?

So, with the above restrictions, how many decks (aka cards) can you come up with? The answer is below. (Scroll down. Don't worry - this isn't a repeat of the [goblin column](#).)



The answer is... okay, the answer that I got (I'm very open to the fact that I missed a deck or two) was 17. (And it jumps to 19 once *Darksteel* comes out.) In addition I had one deck that can draw. And 10 decks that can beat one of the 17 decks that can win.

I'll give you a little more space and then I'll walk you through them. For each card I list what turn the deck wins on (for both playing and drawing) and I walk you through how the deck wins. (Scroll down for the decks.)

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## White

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I could find only one white card. And in true white fashion, it wins by not losing.

### **Serra Avatar** (*Urza's Saga*)

Play – Win on Their Turn 57.

Draw – Win on Their Turn 58.

[How the deck works](#)

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## Blue

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There are no blue cards. That I could find at least.

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## Black

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Black had three cards. It and green tied for the most colored cards.

### **Ichorid** (*Torment*)

Play – Win Turn 10

Draw – Win Turn 9

[How the deck works](#)

### **Nether Shadow** (*Alpha*)

Play – Win Turn 11

Draw – Win Turn 10

[How the deck works](#)

### **Nether Spirit** (*Mercadian Masques*)

Play – Win Turn 7

Draw – Win Turn 6

[How the deck works](#)

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## Red

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No red cards either. There was one red card that could force a draw though. (See below.)

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## Green

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Green has the distinction of having the most variety of wins among the colored cards.

### **Basking Rootwalla** (*Torment*)

Play – Win Turn 8

Draw – Win Turn 7

[How the deck works](#)

### **Elvish Spirit Guide** (*Alliances*)

Play – Win Turn 7

Draw – Win Turn 6

[How the deck works](#)

### **Vine Dryad** (*Mercadian Masques*)

Play – Win Turn 6

Draw – Win Turn 5

[How the deck works](#)

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## Artifacts

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Artifacts had one representative. It did have a few spoil sport decks. (See below.)

### **Legacy Weapon** (*Apocalypse*)

Play – Win on Their Turn 57.

Draw – Win on Their Turn 58.

[How the deck works](#)

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## Land

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Land is the king of this format. Over half of the decks are comprised of land.

### **Barbarian Ring** (*Odyssey*)

Play – Win Turn 19

Draw – Win Turn 18

[How the deck works](#)

### **Cephalid Coliseum** (*Odyssey*)

Play – Win on Turn 23

Draw – Win on their Turn 23

[How the deck works](#)

### **Faerie Conclave** (*Urza's Legacy*)

Play – Win Turn 10

Draw – Win Turn 10

[How the deck works](#)

### **Forbidding Watchtower** (*Urza's Legacy*)

Play – Win Turn 13

Draw – Win Turn 13

[How the deck works](#)

### **Ghitu Encampment** (*Urza's Legacy*)

Play – Win Turn 10

Draw – Win Turn 10

[How the deck works](#)

## **Mishra's Factory** (*Antiquities*)

Play – Win Turn 6

Draw – Win Turn 6

[How the deck works](#)

## **Spawning Pool** (*Urza's Legacy*)

Play – Win Turn 13

Draw – Win Turn 13

[How the deck works](#)

## **Stalking Stones** (*Tempest / Mirrodin*)

Play – Win Turn 10

Draw – Win Turn 10

[How the deck works](#)

## **Treetop Village** (*Urza's Legacy*)

Play – Win Turn 8

Draw – Win Turn 8

[How the deck works](#)

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## **Draw**

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While 17 cards can win outright, there was only one card that could "not lose" aka draw.

## **Cave-In** (*Mercadian Masques*)

Play – Draw Turn 14

Win – Draw Turn 13

[How the deck works](#)

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## **The Spoil Sports**

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Okay, seventeen decks could win. Ten decks, though, could stop at least one of them.

## **Contagion** (*Alliances*)

This deck can stop *Elvish Spirit Guide* and *Nether Spirit*.

## **Force of Will** (*Alliances*)

This deck can stop *Elvish Spirit Guide*.

## **Maze of Ith** (*The Dark*)

This deck can stop Ichorid, Nether Shadow, Nether Spirit, Basking Rootwalla, Elvish Spirit Guide, Vine Dryad, Faerie Conclave, Forbidding Watchtower, Ghitu Encampment, Mishra's Factory, Spawning Pool, Stalking Stones and Treetop Village.

## **Ornithopter** (*Antiquities*)

This deck can stop Nether Shadow, Basking Rootwalla, Forbidding Watchtower, and Spawning Pool.

## **Phyrexian Walker** (*Visions*)

This deck can stop Nether Shadow, Nether Spirit, Basking Rootwalla, Elvish Spirit Guide, Vine Dryad, Forbidding Watchtower, Ghitu Encampment, and Spawning Pool.

## **Pyrokinesis** (*Alliances*)

This deck can stop Nether Spirit, Elvish Spirit Guide, and Vine Dryad.

## **Rishadan Port** (*Mercadian Masques*)

This deck can stop Faerie Conclave, Forbidding Watchtower, Ghitu Encampment, Spawning Pool and Treetop Village.

## **Strip Mine** (*Antiquities*)

This deck can stop Barbarian Ring, Cephalid Coliseum, Faerie Conclave, Forbidding Watchtower, Ghitu Encampment, Mishra's Factory, Spawning Pool, Stalking Stones, and Treetop Village.

## **Unmask** (*Mercadian Masques*)

This deck stops Nether Spirit.

## **Wasteland** (*Tempest*)

This deck can stop Barbarian Ring, Cephalid Coliseum, Faerie Conclave, Forbidding Watchtower, Ghitu Encampment, Mishra's Factory, Spawning Pool, Stalking Stones, and Treetop Village.

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## **Almost**

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Here are a few decks that seem like they can win but don't:

**Ashen Ghoul** (*Ice Age*) – The ability requires black mana to activate.

**Skyshroud Cutter** (*Nemesis*) – You need to have a forest in play to use the alternate casting cost.

Here are a few decks that seem like they might stop one of the decks but don't:

**Scars of the Veteran** (*Alliances*) – This deck can prevent up to 210 damage, but all the decks can simply do more aggregate damage than 210.

**Shield Sphere** (*Alliances*) – Playing eight 0/6 walls if you draw sounds good, but it just isn't enough to stop even the slowest of creature decks as the creatures are able to whittle the Spheres down faster than they can be replaced as the game progresses.

**Spinning Darkness** (*Weatherlight*) – This card is just too slow even against super slow creature decks like Elvish Spirit Guide.

## **Let The Games Begin**

Now that I have the field for this strange format, I felt it only proper (in fine *Inquest* tradition) to run a tournament. After all, this is one of the few formats where each match-up has a definitive answer.

So, here's how it's going to work. I put seeded the 28 decks (17 winning decks, 1 drawing deck, and the 10 spoil sport decks) by putting them in the order the cards were published. If multiple cards appeared in the same expansion, I ordered them alphabetically. As I wanted to run this tournament single elimination, I added four byes in the final four slots.

Whenever two decks meet, the lower seeded deck will play. If the two decks draw game one, the higher seeded deck will play game two. I made all play decisions for the decks, but I believe each match-up has a "correct" answer as this format removes all randomness.

Enough with the rules, let's get on with the tournament. First, the twenty eight decks as seeded:

- 1) **Nether Shadow (Alpha)**
- 2) **Mishra's Factory (*Antiquities*)**
- 3) **Ornithopter (*Antiquities*)**
- 4) **Strip Mine (*Antiquities*)**
- 5) **Maze of Ith (*The Dark*)**
- 6) **Contagion (*Alliances*)**
- 7) **Elvish Spirit Guide (*Alliances*)**
- 8) **Force of Will (*Alliances*)**
- 9) **Pyrokinesis (*Alliances*)**
- 10) **Phyrexian Walker (*Visions*)**
- 11) **Stalking Stones (*Tempest / Mirrodin*)**
- 12) **Wasteland (*Tempest*)**
- 13) **Serra Avtar (*Urza's Saga*)**
- 14) **Faerie Conclave (*Urza's Legacy*)**
- 15) **Forbidding Watchtower (*Urza's Legacy*)**
- 16) **Ghitu Encampment (*Urza's Legacy*)**
- 17) **Spawning Pool (*Urza's Legacy*)**
- 18) **Treetop Village (*Urza's Legacy*)**
- 19) **Cave-In (*Mercadian Masques*)**
- 20) **Nether Spirit (*Mercadian Masques*)**
- 21) **Rishadan Port (*Mercadian Masques*)**
- 22) **Unmask (*Mercadian Masques*)**
- 23) **Vine Dryad (*Mercadian Masques*)**
- 24) **Legacy Weapon (*Apocalypse*)**
- 25) **Barbarian Ring (*Odyssey*)**
- 26) **Cephalid Coliseum (*Odyssey*)**
- 27) **Basking Rootwalla (*Torment*)**
- 28) **Ichorid (*Torment*)**
- 29) **BYE**
- 30) **BYE**
- 31) **BYE**
- 32) **BYE**

Here's how the overall brackets look:

Nether Shadow	-	-	-	-	-	-	Strip Mine
Bye	-	-	-	-	-	-	Bye
Ghitu Encampment	-	-	-	-	-	-	Wasteland
Spawning Post	-	-	-	-	-	-	Rishadan Port
Pyrokinesis	-	-	-	-	-	-	Serra Avatar
Legacy Weapon	-	-	-	-	-	-	Nether Spirit
Force of Will	-	-	-	-	-	-	Maze of Ith
Barbarian Ring	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ichorid
Mishra's Factory	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ornithopter
Bye	-	-	-	-	-	-	Bye
Forbidding Watchtower	-	-	-	-	-	-	Faerie Conclave
Treetop Village	-	-	-	-	-	-	Cave-In
Phyrexian Walker	-	-	-	-	-	-	Stalking Stones
Vine Dryad	-	-	-	-	-	-	Unmask
Elvish Spirit Guide	-	-	-	-	-	-	Contagion
Cephalid Coliseum	-	-	-	-	-	-	Basking Rootwalla

## Round One – Top 32

- **Nether Shadow (#1) vs. BYE (#32)**

- **Mishra's Factory (#2) vs. BYE (#31)**

- **Ornithopter (#3) vs. BYE (#30)**

- **Strip Mine (#4) vs. BYE (#29)**

Winners: **Nether Shadow (#1), Mishra's Factory (#2), Ornithopter (#3), and Strip Mine (#4)**

Even though BYE got to play four matches, he continued his lifetime losing streak.

- **Maze of Ith (#5) vs. Ichorid (#28)**

Winner: **Maze of Ith (#5)**

Because **Maze of Ith** was the lower seed, it got to play first. This would prove to be key as **Maze of Ith** was able to keep **Ichorid** from doing any damage as it always had more Mazes out than the **Ichorid** deck had **Ichorids**. This meant that the **Ichorid** deck lost to decking a turn before the **Maze of Ith** deck.

- **Contagion (#6) vs. Basking Rootwalla (#27)**

Winner: **Basking Rootwalla (#27)**

The **Contagion** deck has the ability to create thirty eight –2/-1 counters. (**Contagion** can only be played nineteen times as each use costs 1 life.) The **Basking Rootwalla** deck can put out fifty-three threats before decking itself. This means the little green guys outrun the mean looking cat.

- **Elvish Spirit Guide (#7) vs. Cephalid Coliseum (#26)**

Winner: **Elvish Spirit Guide (#7)**

The **Elvish Spirit** deck wins before the **Cephalid Coliseum** deck even gets to threshold.

- **Force of Will (#8) vs. Barbarian Ring (#25)**

Winner: **Barbarian Ring (#25)**

The **Force of Will** deck has real problems against a deck that never plays a spell.

- **Pyrokinesis (#9) vs. Legacy Weapon (#24)**

Winner: **Legacy Weapon (#24)**

This was one of the more snooze-inducing matches. Neither deck did anything, but **Legacy Weapon's** ability kept it from being decked.

- **Phyrexian Walker (#10) vs. Vine Dryad (#23)**

Winner: **Phyrexian Walker (#10)**

In one of the odder match-ups, the **Phyrexian Walker** deck holds off the **Vine Dryad** deck (The former can make 0/3 creatures faster than the other can make 1/3) allowing it to deck itself first.

- **Stalking Stones (#11) vs. Unmask (#22)**

Winner: **Stalking Stones (#11)**

The **Unmask** deck really wanted to meet the **Nether Spirit** deck as it is the only deck in the competition that it can beat. In the end, the **Unmask** deck couldn't force enough discards to keep the **Stalking Stones** deck from getting the necessary six lands into play.

- **Wasteland (#12) vs. Rishadan Port (#21)**

Winner: **Wasteland (#12)**

The match-up of the land hosers came down to decking as neither deck has a win condition. Since **Rishadan Port** drew first, it was the first to get decked.

- **Serra Avatar (#13) vs. Nether Spirit (#20)**

Winner: **Nether Spirit (#20)**

The **Serra Avatar** can only win by decking. The **Nether Spirit** deck has a more aggressive win condition and thus handily won.

- **Faerie Conclave (#14) vs. Cave-In (#19)**

Winner: **Faerie Conclave (#14)**

Here's the Crux of the match:

Turn 4: The **Faerie Conclave** deck makes a 2/1 faerie. The **Cave-In** deck is forced to spend two cards to destroy it as the deck cannot draw once it's taken damage. The **Cave-In** deck now has five cards.

Turn 5: The **Faerie Conclave** deck makes another 2/1 faerie. The **Cave-In** deck is again forced to destroy it. The **Cave-In** deck is down to four cards (remember it drew a card).

Turn 6: Same thing. **Cave-In** down to three cards.

Turn 7: Same thing. **Cave-In** down to two cards.

Turn 8: Same thing. **Cave-In** down to one card.

Turn 9: The **Cave-In** deck has run out of answers and the **Faerie Conclave** decks deals the all important first blood.

- **Forbidding Watchtower (#15) vs. Treetop Village (#18)**

Winner: **Forbidding Watchtower (#15)**

This is probably the most interesting match-up in the first round as two of the "man-lands" face off against each other. The **Forbidding Watchtower** deck as the lower seed merely needs to hold off the **Treetop Village** deck to win by decking. The **Treetop Village** deck has a higher power (3 vs. 1) but the **Forbidding Watchtower** deck has the highest toughness (5 vs. 3). The key to this match-up though is seeding because

by playing first, the **Forbidding Watchtower** deck is able to always have an available blocker when an animated **Treetop Village** attacks. Interestingly, if the **Treetop Village** had been playing, it would have been able to get in three points of damage every third turn as it would have been able to create an extra creature a turn ahead of the **Forbidding Watchtower** deck. But alas, it didn't play first and the **Forbidding Watchtower** deck wins.

•  
**Ghitu Encampment (#16) vs. Spawning Pool (#17)**

Winner: **Ghitu Encampment (#16)**

This match plays out very similarly to the last one, but with one twist. The 2/1 first strikers of the **Ghitu Encampment** can hold off the 1/1 regenerators of the **Spawning Pool** allowing the **Ghitu Encampment** deck to win by decking just like the **Forbidding Watchtower** deck. But unlike that match-up, the **Ghitu Encampment** deck can, by going first, get two damage in every third turn. Since the **Spawning Pool** cannot win this race (trading 1 life for 2), it ultimately loses even if the **Ghitu Encampment** deck gets aggressive.

## Round 2 – Top 16

Here's the top 16 brackets:

Nether Shadow	Nether Shadow					Strip Mine	Strip Mine
Bye						Bye	
Ghitu Encampment	Ghitu Encampment					Wasteland	Wasteland
Spawning Post						Rishadan Port	
Pyrokinesis	Legacy Weapon					Nether Spirit	Serra Avatar
Legacy Weapon						Nether Spirit	
Force of Will	Barbarian Ring					Maze of Ith	Maze of Ith
Barbarian Ring						Ichorid	
Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory					Ornithopter	Ornithopter
Bye						Bye	
Forbidding Watchtower	Forbidding Watchtower					Faerie Conclave	Faerie Conclave
Treetop Village						Cave-In	
Phyrexian Walker	Phyrexian Walker					Stalking Stones	Stalking Stones
Vine Dryad						Unmask	
Elvish Spirit Guide	Elvish Spirit Guide					Basking Rootwalla	Contagion
Cephalid Coliseum						Basking Rootwalla	Basking Rootwalla

•  
**Nether Shadow (#1) vs. Ghitu Encampment (#16)**

Winner: **Nether Shadow (#1)**

The key to this match-up is two-fold. First, the **Nether Shadow** deck, once it gets going, creates a 1/1 every turn while the **Ghitu Encampment** deck creates a 2/1 first striker every third turn. Add to this the problem that the **Nether Shadows** keep returning even if they're killed and the **Nether Shadow** deck just overwhelms the **Ghitu Encampment** deck.

•  
**Mishra's Factory (#2) vs. Forbidding Watchtower (#15)**

Winner: **Mishra's Factory (#2)**

This is another case of two creature decks coming face to face and the faster one overrunning the slower one. In this case, it isn't close. The **Mishra's Factory** deck deals 9 damage before the **Forbidding Watchtower** deck can even block.

•  
**Ornithopter (#4) vs. Faerie Conclave (#14)**

Winner: **Faerie Conclave (#14)**

The **Ornithopter** deck is greatly hampered in this match-up by its inability to win. It does a valiant job of trying to stall the game out, but as an **Ornithopter** is lost in each combat, it is only a matter of time before the **Faerie Conclave** deck breaks through.

•  
**Strip Mine (#4) vs. Wasteland (#12)**

Winner: **Strip Mine (#4)**

This is a match-up of a master and its disciple. And as we all know, the master always wins. This is another one of those matches where seeding matters. Thus, it seems only apropos that **Strip Mine**, by being the older card (and thus drawing second), wins the match through decking.

•  
**Elvish Spirit Guide (#7) vs. Phyrexian Walker (#10)**

Winner: **Elvish Spirit Guide (#10)**

The **Phyrexian Walker** deck can actually win this match-up. If it draws second. But it doesn't. Thus, although it stops all invading Spirit Guides, it cannot keep from being decked.

•  
**Stalking Stones (#11) vs. Basking Rootwalla (#27)**

Winner: **Basking Rootwalla (#27)**

The **Stalking Stones** deck cannot have an untapped 3/3 in play until turn 7. The problem is at that point the deck has already taken 15 damage and is staring down six 1/1 Rootwallas. Once again, the fast little 1/1 creatures win the match.

•  
**Maze of Ith (#15) vs. Nether Spirit (#20)**

Winner: **Maze of Ith (#15)**

The **Maze of Ith** deck is the best spoiler deck. Even so, it can only win against a deck that kills with creatures and only if it draws second. Well, for the second time in the tournament, it got that match-up.

•  
**Legacy Weapon (#24) vs. Barbarian Ring (#25)**

Winner: **Barbarian Ring (#25)**

The **Legacy Weapon** deck cannot beat a deck capable of beating it with damage. While the **Barbarian Ring** deck is not the most efficient or speediest at doing this, it gets the job done.

## Round 3 – Top 8 (Quarter Finals)

Here's the bracket for the Quarter Finals:

Nether Shadow	Nether Shadow	Nether Shadow	-	-	Strip Mine	Strip Mine	Strip Mine
Bye							Bye
Ghitu Encampment	Ghitu Encampment					Wasteland	Wasteland
Spawning Post				Rishadan Port			
Pyrokinesis	Legacy Weapon	Barbarian Ring	-	-	Maze of Ith	Nether Spirit	Serra Avatar
Legacy Weapon							Nether Spirit
Force of Will	Barbarian Ring					Maze of Ith	Maze of Ith
Barbarian Ring				Ichorid			
Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory	-	-	Faerie Conclave	Ornithopter	Ornithopter
Bye							Bye
Forbidding Watchtower	Forbidding Watchtower					Faerie Conclave	Faerie Conclave
Treetop Village				Cave-In			
Phyrexian Walker	Phyrexian Walker	Elvish Spirit			Basking	Stalking	Stalking

		Guide		Rootwalla	Stones	Stones
Vine Dryad						Unmask
Elvish Spirit Guide	Elvish Spirit Guide				Basking Rootwalla	Contagion
Cephalid Coliseum						Basking Rootwalla

• **Nether Shadow (#1) vs. Barbarian Ring (#25)**

Winner: **Nether Shadow (#1)**

This match-up has a lovely early game as both sides spend their beginning turns discarding cards. The **Nether Shadow** has two huge advantages. First, it's much faster than the **Barbarian Ring** deck. And second, the **Barbarian Ring** deck has no permanent answer for the ever-growing horde of **Nether Shadows**. Also, the self-inflicted damage from activating the **Barbarian Rings** doesn't help.

• **Mishra's Factory (#2) vs. Elvish Spirit Guide (#7)**

Winner: **Mishra's Factory (#2)**

The **Mishra's Factory** deck is fast. The **Elvish Spirit Guide** deck is slow. It isn't pretty.

• **Strip Mine (#4) vs. Maze of Ith (#15)**

Winner: **Strip Mine (#4)**

Somehow **Strip Mine** managed a Bye and a match-up against two non-basic land decks. Combined with its low seed, the **Strip Mine** deck wins for the third straight match (by decking, the only way it can win) and somehow sneaks into the top four.

• **Faerie Conclave (#14) vs. Basking Rootwalla (#27)**

Winner: **Basking Rootwalla (#27)**

This match-up boils down to two factors. Which deck creates creatures faster? And which deck has the fastest goldfish kill? The answer in both cases is the **Basking Rootwalla** deck. The **Faerie Conclave** deck gets a 2/1 flier every third turn. The **Basking Rootwalla** gets a 1/1 every turn. Three 1/1s trump one 2/1 even if it does fly.

## Round Four – Top 4 (Semi-Finals)

Here's the bracket for the Semi Finals:

Nether Shadow	Nether Shadow	Nether Shadow	Nether Shadow	Strip Mine	Strip Mine	Strip Mine	Strip Mine
Bye							
Ghitu Encampment	Ghitu Encampment	Nether Shadow	Nether Shadow	Strip Mine	Strip Mine	Wasteland	Wasteland
Spawning Post							
Pyrokinesis	Legacy Weapon	Barbarian Ring	Barbarian Ring	Maze of Ith	Maze of Ith	Nether Spirit	Serra Avatar
Legacy Weapon							
Force of Will	Barbarian Ring	Barbarian Ring	Barbarian Ring	Maze of Ith	Maze of Ith	Maze of Ith	Maze of Ith
Barbarian Ring							
Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory	Basking Rootwalla	Faerie Conclave	Ornithoper	Ornithopter
Bye							

Forbidding Watchtower	Forbidding Watchtower					Faerie Conclave	Faerie Conclave
Treetop Village							Cave-In
Phyrexian Walker	Phyrexian Walker					Stalking Stones	Stalking Stones
Vine Dryad		Elvish Spirit Guide			Basking Rootwalla		Unmask
Elvish Spirit Guide	Elvish Spirit Guide					Basking Rootwalla	Contagion
Cephalid Coliseum							Basking Rootwalla

- **Nether Shadow (#1) vs. Strip Mine (#4)**

Winner: **Nether Shadow**

The **Strip Mine** deck finally meets a real deck and gets its clocked cleaned.

- **Mishra's Factory (#2) vs. Basking Rootwalla (#27)**

Winner: **Mishra's Factory (#2)**

The **Basking Rootwalla** deck is fast but no matter whether it plays or draws, it's always a turn behind the **Mishra's Factory** deck. In addition, the **Mishra's Factory's** ability to chose which Assembly Factory to pump up gives it very useful flexibility.

## Round Five – Top 2 (Finals)



Ironically, the top two decks were actually seeded #1 and #2. But are they in the correct order? This is by far the most interesting match-up of the tournament.

- **Nether Shadow (#1) vs. Mishra's Factory (#2)**

Let me walk you through this one before I announce the winner: (Note I'm abbreviate NS for **Nether Shadow** and MF for **Mishra's Factory**.)

NS Turn 1: Do nothing. **[NS 20 Life, MF 20 Life]**

MF Turn 1: Play MF.

NS Turn 2: At end of turn, discard NS.

MF Turn 2: Play a second MF. Use it to activate first MF and attack for 2. **[NS 18, MF 20]**

NS Turn 3: At end of turn, discard NS.

MF Turn 3: Play a third MF. Use it to activate a MF, pump it with the other MF and then attack for 3. **[NS 15, MF 20]**

NS Turn 4: At end of turn, discard NS.

MF Turn 4: Play a fourth MF. Use it and another MF to activate the other two and then attack for 4. **[NS 11, MF 20]**

NS Turn 5: At end of turn, discard NS.

MF Turn 5: Play a fifth MF. Use two of them to activate two other MF. Pump one of them with the fifth MF. Attack with a 2/2 and a 3/3 to deal 5 damage. **[NS 6, MF 20]**

NS Turn 6: At the beginning of the turn, put a 1/1 NS into play from the bottom of the graveyard. At end of turn, discard a NS.

MF Turn 6: Play a sixth MF. Use three MF to activate the other three MF. Attack with three 2/2s. One is blocked by a NS. Your MF deal 4 damage. **[NS 2, MF 20]**

NS Turn 7: At the beginning of the turn, put two 1/1 NS into play from the bottom of the graveyard. At end of turn, discard a NS.

MF Turn 7: Play a seventh MF. Use three MF to activate three other MF. Attack with three 2/2s. Pump up the one not blocked by a NS. Your MF deals 3 damage. **[NS -1, MF 20]** MF deck wins.

Winner: **Mishra's Factory (#2)**

Nether Shadow	Nether Shadow	Nether Shadow	Nether Shadow	Strip Mine	Strip Mine	Strip Mine	Strip Mine	Strip Mine	
Bye								Bye	
Ghitu Encampment	Ghitu Encampment						Wasteland	Wasteland	
Spawning Post								Rishadan Port	
Pyrokinesis	Legacy Weapon	Barbarian Ring	Nether Shadow	Strip Mine	Maze of Ith	Maze of Ith	Nether Spirit	Serra Avatar	
Legacy Weapon								Nether Spirit	
Force of Will	Barbarian Ring							Maze of Ith	Maze of Ith
Barbarian Ring							Nether Shadow	Ichorid	
Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory	Basking Rootwalla	Faerie Conclave	Ornithopter	Ornithopter	
Bye								Bye	
Forbidding Watchtower	Forbidding Watchtower							Faerie Conclave	Faerie Conclave
Treetop Village								Cave-In	
Phyrexian Walker	Phyrexian Walker	Elvish Spirit Guide	Mishra's Factory	Mishra's Factory	Basking Rootwalla	Basking Rootwalla	Stalking Stones	Stalking Stones	
Vine Dryad								Unmask	
Elvish Spirit Guide	Elvish Spirit Guide							Contagion	
Cephalid Coliseum								Basking Rootwalla	

In the end, the deck with the fastest goldfish kill does indeed prove to be the strongest deck.

## Conclusion

I hope you enjoyed my little detour this week into a slightly different area of R&D-think. Let me know if you enjoyed this type of column so I'll have some idea whether I should do others like it in the future.

Join me next week when I share with you the personal *Mirrodin* design diary that I never kept.

Until then, may your **Unmask** deck get the **Nether Spirit** match-up.

Mark Rosewater

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