

Scott Wills  
Monday, April 12, 2004

---

Welcome to this week's Limited Information column. Regular readers may remember that a couple of weeks back I ran an article on drafting black-red within *Mirrodin-Mirrodin-Darksteel* draft. The article proved fairly popular and I've had a lot of requests for more articles dealing with other colour combinations too. As a result this week's article is going to be covering one of the more uncommon colour combinations: green-white.

The green-white decklist from last week's article was maligned by a number of players, not least of all by Mike Flores in his comments on the draft pick. Now I know green-white isn't the best colour combination out there, but it's also definitely not unplayable. Indeed there are times when it's correct to draft green-white, and so I'm going to spend this week's article discussing how to recognise those times and how I think these two colours work together.

## The problem

Historically green-white has been a pretty weak colour combination. The primary reason for this is that it usually lacks any outright creature removal, instead having to rely on cards like *Pacifism* which are vulnerable to both bounce and enchantment removal. Instead of creature removal it has Giant Growth effects, Fog effects and damage prevention. The problem with these is that they're often situational. Killing the offending creature outright is usually a much better idea than preventing the damage it deals for one turn. Giant Growth effects are only really useful if your creatures are mixing it up in combat with your opponent's.

So what has changed to make green-white more playable in this format?

The most obvious thing is that this format is heavily artifact based and Green is the best colour out there when it comes to dealing with opposing artifacts. You need only look at *Viridian Shaman* and *Oxidize* to see this. Green also has a number of creatures with 'Protection from Artifacts' which proves to be a useful ability in this block. In cards like *Deconstruct* and *Viridian Shaman* green actually does have creature removal although that removal is dependant upon the target creature being an artifact.

There are other changes to the colours that have occurred due to Wizards R&D manipulating the colour pie. Green and white used to be fairly under-represented in the number of cool limited abilities they had, but this is now improving. The biggest place you can see this effect is in the division of flyers within the colours. *Leonin Skyhunter* is the most obvious example – in the past this would always have been a blue card but now it's migrated over into white. White also has *Skyhunter Patrol* over the weaker *Somber Hoverguard*.

In previous blocks Blue usually had two solid flyers amongst its common slots: *Tower Drake* and *Faerie Squadron* in *Invasion*. *Aven Fisher* and *Aven Windreader* in *Odyssey*. *Ascending Aven* and *Mistform Dreamer* in *Onslaught*. In *Mirrodin* however Blue only really gets the *Hoverguard* – *Neurok Familiar* and *Cobalt Golem* aren't classed as quality flyers in my book. Green usually has a weakness against flyers and that's not as true in *Mirrodin* block. In addition to the fact that opposing flyers are weakened in general we also have the presence of *Tel-Jilad Archers*, and to a lesser extent *Tangle Spider*, which provide excellent answers to the problems posed by flyers.

The other thing we find in this block is a distinct lack of problematic creatures that have to be removed at all costs.

In the previous block we had the all-dominating presence of Sparksmith to content with. There were also cards like Timberwatch Elf, Wellwisher and big Daru Stingers that had huge impact on games even though they weren't directly involved in combat. Although initial fears were that Spikeshot Goblin would take over Sparksmith's role I don't think anyone could call Spikey as ridiculous as Sparksmith now we've all had time to get used to him. Yes, a Spikeshot Goblin + Bonesplitter is basically game over but that's a much more specific combination than Sparksmith + Any Other Goblin. Even when facing such a threat green can still deal with the equipment whilst white can Arrest the Goblin himself. Those are answers that green-white did not have in *Onslaught* block and they're part of the reason why this colour combination is playable today.



The final reason I like this combination is that the 'Falter' effect for this set has moved into white. Green is often slower to get going than the other colours and as a result it *Better off dead...*

usually needs something that will allow it to outrace its opponent. What usually happens is that the green player will take some early damage whilst they get set-up, then they'll try and race any evasive creatures whilst an opponent tries to find enough blockers or removal to give their evasive guys time to finish things off. In previous sets we've seen some sort of card that prevents an opponent from blocking during a key turn of the game. Many green-red decks have finished off an opponent using a Wave of Indifference or Demoralize over the last couple of years. This time around red has no such card, but instead we get the powerful Blinding Beam in white. This card is at its best in this sort of deck as it is useful defensively to stall an opponent's attack for two turns, or it can be used later on to force through a couple of big attacks. Blinding Beam is excellent in any deck but it really excels here.

## When to draft green-white

I never sit down at a draft with the intention of drafting this colour combination and you shouldn't either. It's one of several combinations that's only really viable when you are being gifted some great late picks in these colours.

A typical green-white draft for me usually starts out with me being in white. I rarely first-pick a green card from a pack, although if there really is no other choice then I will do so. What usually happens is that my first 2-3 picks of the draft will be solid white cards, and then all of a sudden a 3rd or 4th pick Deconstruct or Fangren Hunter will pop up. At this point you first need to remember whether or not you've passed any quality green up until this point. Green is fairly weak in *Darksteel* and as a result you'll be pinning your hopes on getting good picks in the next *Mirrodin* pack. This means you'll have to be fairly sure the guy on your left hasn't had a good reason to move into green themselves.

A first-pick green card like Deconstruct or Fangren Hunter coming round 4th-5th pick is a good indicator that green is being under-drafted at the table. Green isn't the best of colours but if you're one of only two people drafting it then it's fine. You don't really want to be one of three green drafters so recognising when the green cards are coming later than they should is important.

It's unlikely that you'll get any amazing picks later than 6th or 7th pick in the draft, although if cards like Tel-Jilad Archers or Predator's Strike make it round to you then so much the better. The best gift I received when drafting this way was a 12th pick One Dozen Eyes. What normally happens is that you're able to cut the green cards off so that you have two or three drafters on your left who aren't drafting green. That way, when they open up Fangren Hunters and Deconstructs in their next *Mirrodin* pack they are all shipped to you.

To sum up, only really look to draft green when you're getting shipped the goods late in a draft. If you're in a position where you are already white, or are getting passed good white cards as well, then don't be afraid to draft this combination.

## How to draft green-white

Unlike the different types of black-red deck that you can draft, I believe there's only really one way to be successful with white-green and that is to be aggressive right from the start. You should focus on drafting aggressive, attack-oriented creatures and your tricks should focus on keeping them alive and allowing them to deal damage to your opponent. You're looking for high power-to-casting-cost ratios but you also need to focus on having a solid mana curve so you don't ever fall too far behind an opponent.

For me the most important part of this deck is what you do in the first few turns of the game. You're usually planning on winning the game with your bigger, slower creatures but to be in a position to do this you need to make it through the first few turns of the game without falling too far behind your opponent in terms of board development. In this deck, more than any other outside of Affinity perhaps, the Myr are very important. They accelerate you by a whole turn and allow you to get your bigger guns into play that much quicker. You'll basically play as many Myr as you can get your hands on – off-colour ones are perfectly fine.

If you don't get Myr then having other things to do in the first couple of turns is very important. Auriok Transfixer is pretty much the only one casting cost creature I like in this deck; I wouldn't normally expect Leonin Elder, Auriok Glaivemaster or any of the others to make the cut. There is however a bit more choice for your second turn as Tel-Jilad Chosen, Raise the Alarm and Leonin Den-Guard are all excellent choices for this deck. Both the Chosen and the Den-guard can provide good, early, defensive roles whilst still having the potential to be valuable attackers later on in the game. I'll often draft something like a Den-guard or a Chosen over a trick like Predator's Strike when drafting this combination. Indeed there are times when Tel-Jilad Chosen is a better pick than Tel-Jilad Archers! If your deck is expensive and you have enough fatties already then I would definitely prefer a Chosen to the Archers.

It's important to carry through the aggressive theme into your more expensive creatures too. Cards like Cathodion, Razor Golem and Fangren Hunter are all very, very important. You don't want your creature count to be including things like Yotian Soldier or even Tel-Jilad Exile if you can avoid it. You want as many creatures as possible that will hit an opponent hard when he or she declines to block them.

When picking up the white part of the deck you need to make a decision fairly early on as to how much equipment you plan on running. You can normally decide this within the first pack of the draft making the decision dependant upon the cards you've drafted thus far. This deck is quite capable of functioning without any of the common equipment cards at all and if you don't get many early on then the value you place on Skyhunter Cub and Leonin Den-Guard lessens. Both those creatures are excellent if you can support them but you don't want to be in a position where you have to pass up on Fangren Hunters so you can grab the Leonin Scimitar you need to power up your white guys.



*Make the attack phase count...and hurt!*

There is one piece of equipment that you really do want in this deck though, and that's Leonin Bola. Early in the game it can be used to slow your opponent down and later on it's excellent at forcing your Hunters and Tangle Golems through your opponent's defences. This deck typically has a higher creature count than most and, just like Blinding Beam, Leonin Bola is at its best in this style of deck. Because your creature removal is few and far between (Arrest and Deconstruct typically being all you have available) there's a much greater reliance on 'tappers' here. If you can't get a Bola then hopefully Loxodon Mystics and Auriok Transfixers will help make up for it.

The spells that make up the deck are basically what you would expect to see. In addition to the Blinding Beam you'll hope to pick up a Deconstruct. You'd prefer to have the better combat tricks like Predator's Strike but anything that gives you options is worth playing here. I quite like Awe Strike in green-white as it's very flexible. You can use it to keep one of your guys alive during combat by simply preventing the combat damage an opponent's creature could deal. You can also effectively 'fog' a creature for two turns by reversing the damage it deals to you for a turn. It can occasionally prove invaluable when an opponent goes 'all-in' and sacrifices a bunch of artifacts to their Atog or Krark-Clan Grunt in order to kill you.

The green-white deck I listed in last week's article started out with the following picks from **Mirrodin**:

Auriok Transfixer  
Auriok Bladewarden  
Leonin Den-Guard  
Tel-Jilad Chosen  
Viridian Joiner  
Elf Replica  
Skyhunter Cub  
Cathodion  
Tel-Jilad Exile  
Fangren Hunter  
Molder Slug  
One Dozen Eyes  
Wurmskin Forger  
Awe Strike  
Battlegrowth  
Turn to Dust  
Raise the Alarm  
Granite Shard  
Arrest x 2  
Farsight Mask  
Myr Incubator

*Darksteel* was fairly kind with the first-pick Specter's Shroud followed by another Shroud as my second pick. A Loxodon Mystic came third, and I was lucky to scoop up a Razor Golem over an Echoing Courage next focussing on the importance of the quick aggressive creatures. Due to the fact that green was being under-drafted I was able to pick up a Tangle Spider and the Echoing Courage came back round the table as well.

The cards I picked from *Darksteel* totalled up to:

Specter's Shroud Specter's Shroud Razor Golem Loxodon Mystic Tangle Spider Drill-Skimmer Echoing Courage Burden of Greed Scavenging Scarab Darksteel Pendant Demon's Horn Metal Fatigue Unforge Ur-Golem's Eye Viridian Acolyte

From the above pool I built the following deck:



**Main Deck**

40 cards

9 Forest	1 Auriok Bladewarden	2 Arrest
8 Plains	1 Auriok Transfixer	1 Awe Strike
-----	1 Cathodion	1 Battlegrowth
17 lands	1 Elf Replica	1 Drill-Skimmer
	1 Fangren Hunter	1 Echoing Courage
	1 Leonin Den-Guard	1 Loxodon Mystic
	1 Molder Slug	1 One Dozen Eyes
	1 Skyhunter Cub	1 Raise the Alarm
	1 Tel-Jilad Chosen	1 Razor Golem
	1 Viridian Joiner	2 Specter's Shroud
	-----	1 Tangle Spider
	10 creatures	-----
		13 other spells



This is a fairly typical example of the sort of green-white deck I'm talking about. It's not ideal by any means – the curve is a little high and it's lacking both Blinding Beam and Leonin Bola to help force through damage. Transfixer and Mystic help out there though. It's also missing a Deconstruct although it does happen to have a Molder Slug to make up for those shortcomings.

It has a respectable number of things to do early in the game – five potential plays in the first two turns. It could do with something else but that's fine. It has the potential to curve out well with decent creatures at three, four and five mana. It's combat tricks aren't great but there's a few of them and they'll each usually be able to save a creature. Battlegrowth is obviously the weakest but I included it because it often does save a guy and here it has a nice interaction with the Bladewarden. Indeed there was one game where a Fangren Hunter was double-blocked by a Razor Golem and a Skyhunter

Patrol. The active Bladewarden would normally have not saved me from a simple one-for-one trade but the Battlegrowth on the Bladewarden meant it could save the Hunter while still preserving the threat of pumping the Hunter to a 6/6 trampler in future turns.

As I mentioned in my previous article this deck 3-0'd in the 1700 room on **Magic Online**. I wouldn't expect it to do that every time but it didn't feel like an unusually lucky performance either. The Slug was responsible for only one game win whereas the Specter's Shrouds proved very valuable.

So that's it for green-white, hopefully that will be of some use for you in your own explorations of the archetype. Just remember, don't go looking for the green and white cards, but if they start falling into your lap don't be afraid to take them either.

## Next Week

Back to your regularly scheduled programming next week. It's a *Mirrodin-Mirrodin-Darksteel* booster draft and your deck is shaping up nicely. Your playable picks after the two *Mirrodin* packs are as follows:

Disciple of the Vault  
Neurok Familiar  
Silver Myr  
Psychic Membrane  
Nim Lasher x 2  
Cobalt Golem  
Duskworker  
Myr Enforcer x 2  
Somber Hoverguard  
Looming Hoverguard  
Mirror Golem

Terror  
Irradiate  
Lightning Greaves  
Nuisance Engine  
Scale of Chiss-Goria  
Synod Sanctum  
Thoughtcast  
Talisman of Dominance  
Annul  
Ancient Den  
Vault of Whispers

You open up your **Darksteel** booster and are presented with the following choices:



**Instant**

Destroy target artifact. It can't be regenerated.

*"Ashes to ashes, rust to rust."  
—Viridian shaman*

—Kev Walker

**Creature — Spider**

You may play Tangle Spider any time you could play an instant. Tangle Spider may block as though it had flying.

*They're considered good luck by the elves they don't eat.*

—Terese Nielsen

3/4

**Creature — Rat**

When Chittering Rats comes into play, target opponent puts a card from his or her hand on top of his or her library.

*Bottom feeders sometimes rise to the top.*

—Dan Wästerbyrd

2/2

**Darksteel Pendant**

Artifact

Darksteel Pendant is indestructible. ("Destroy" effects and lethal damage don't destroy it.)

1, ⚡: Look at the top card of your library. You may put that card on the bottom of your library.

—Stephane Nielsen

**Pteron Ghost**

Creature — Spirit

Flying

Sacrifice Pteron Ghost: Regenerate target artifact.

*Defending to the death isn't always enough.*

—Edward P. Beard, Jr.

1/1

**Vedalken Engineer**

Creature — Vedalken Artificer

⚡: Add two mana of any one color to your mana pool. Spend this mana only to play artifact spells or activated abilities of artifacts.

*Art is unknown to the vedalken—for them, all creations must serve a purpose.*

—Lars Grant-West

1/1

**Archbound Worker**

Artifact Creature

Modular 1 (This comes into play with a +1/+1 counter on it. When it's put into a graveyard, you may put its +1/+1 counters on target artifact creature.)

*The parts are as strong as the whole.*

—Daryll Eich

0/0

**Reap and Sow**

Sorcery

Choose one — Destroy target land; or search your library for a land card, put that card into play, then shuffle your library.

Entwine 1 ⚡ (Choose both if you pay the entwine cost.)

—Rob Alexander

**Razor Golem**

Artifact Creature — Golem

Affinity for Plains (This spell costs 1 less to play for each Plains you control.)

Attacking doesn't cause Razor Golem to tap.

*The longer it stands among the deadly blades of the Razor Fields, the more it adopts their harsh exterior.*

—Christopher Yung

3/4

**Neurok Prodigy**

Creature — Human Wizard

Flying

Discard an artifact card from your hand: Return Neurok Prodigy to its owner's hand.

*"Why should I be bound by rules when I can see so far beyond them?"*

—Puckett

2/1

**Auriok Glaivemaster**

Creature — Human Soldier

As long as Auriok Glaivemaster is equipped, it gets +1/+1 and has first strike.

*"Give me a bit of steel and I'll deliver it into the hearts of my enemies."*

—John Matson

1/1

**Whispersilk Cloak**

Artifact — Equipment

Equipped creature is unblockable and can't be the target of spells or abilities.

Equip 2 (2: Attach to target creature you control. Equip only as a sorcery. This card comes into play unattached and stays in play if the creature leaves play.)

—Lizbeth Zentgraf

Which card do you chose?

- Serum Powder
- Darksteel Gargoyle
- Hoverguard Observer
- Oxidize
- Tangle Spider
- Chittering Rats
- Darksteel Pendant
- Pteron Ghost
- Vedalken Engineer
- Arcbound Worker
- Reap and Sow
- Razor Golem
- Neurok Prodigy
- Auriok Glaivemaster
- Whispersilk Cloak

Submit

That's all for this week, see you all next Monday when I'll list the results from the above poll and discuss the potential picks you can make.

Thanks for reading,

Scott Wills  
limitedinformation@yahoo.com

---

© 1995-2009 Wizards of the Coast LLC, a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Statement](#)

