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Elf Assault

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Building on a Budget
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

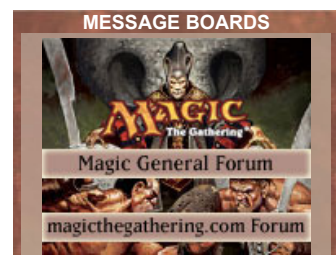
Before I start this article, I would like to apologize for last week's article. Several of you emailed me (probably half the magic players on the planet) wondering about the use of **Dwarven Shrine** in my deck. This was a grievous error on my part and I did all I could do to correct the error after the fact, posting an alternative deck in the forums that used solely the **Nantuko Shrine**. In effect, I managed to make a budget deck that was only good at killing the player playing the deck...bad eggs indeed.

This deck, unlike the last, has no chance of accidentally killing you.

This deck celebrates the banning of **Skullclamp**. Now, if you want to learn more about **Skullclamp** and why it was banned, read [Aaron's article](#). If you don't feel like clicking over right now, lets just say this was probably one of the easiest decisions to make in banning a card since **Tolarian Academy**.

Without **Skullclamp** powered superdecks, I feel that Elves once again stand a good chance in Standard. This deck takes a little spin on the Elf variant. I was having trouble with the decision to publish this deck simply because I have already published several other Elf decks. This one takes quite a different spin using two unusual cards that change the deck to a significant degree – **Seismic Assault** and **Hystrodon**.

One problem that Elves always had was that in some games, you would just draw too many lands. In **Magic**, this happens on occasion and the players chalk it up to statistics. But you can change those statistics drastically by adding a card like **Seismic Assault** to the deck, changing every land you draw into a free **Shock**. This also allows cards like **Sprouting Vines** and **Krosan Tusker** to become extra powerful, thinning your deck of land and netting card advantage. The Assault also solves the last problem Elves had...the inability to remove unwanted creatures from the table (**Sparksmith**, **Goblin Sharpshooter**) and deal those last few points of damage. The **Hystrodon** is an all purpose beater, acting as a trampler for your **Timberwatch Elf** and a card drawing engine so your **Seismic Assault** will not run dry...not to mention I have a habit of putting at least one type of morph creature in my Elf decks – they add so much to the suspense of a morphed **Birchlore Rangers**.



Building on a Budget: Elf Assault (under 30 tickets) H.dec

Main Deck
60 cards

9 Mountain 15 Forest <hr/> 24 lands	4 Krosan Tusker 3 Timberwatch Elf 4 Hystrodon 4 Wirewood Herald 4 Birchlore Rangers 1 Caller of the Claw 1 Viridian Shaman 4 Wellwisher 3 Wirewood Symbiote <hr/> 28 creatures	4 Sprouting Vines 4 Seismic Assault <hr/> 8 other spells
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For those of you who are familiar with my Elf decks, this works in a similar manner for the most part. **Wirewood Herald** is the backbone of the deck – threatening to fetch **Timberwatch**, **Viridian Shaman**, **Caller of the Claw**, or even **Wellwisher**. **Wirewood Symbiote** lets you reuse your elves and do all sorts of tricky things like saving them when they are about to die. You can do massive damage with the **Timberwatch** without even really trying. I would say the most notable difference between this deck and the other Elf decks is the conspicuous absence of **Wirewood Lodge**. I do not run the lodge because often your ideal mana in play is 1 Forest and 3 Mountains, holding the rest of the land in your hand for **Seismic Assault**. This puts a strain on your Green mana, and sometimes it is worth playing the second forest, but **Wirewood Lodge** would require you to lay down even more land that could be better used to **Shock** things. Besides the Elf aspect, the **Seismic Assault** aspect required you to remember to hold lands in your hand, so when you play it out you can decimate your opponent.

Tips on Playing the Deck

- **Sprouting Vines** is often best used at the end of your opponent's turn – that way you don't need to have much mana to get a Storm copy. I would try to get at least 2 lands, but 3 would be above average.
- You should never be able to nor want to hard cast **Krosan Tusker**.
- The **Hystrodon** can be very helpful in finding your **Seismic Assault** if it isn't in your opening hand. It might be worth spending your turn 3 and 4 morphing and unmorphing the **Hystrodon** in order to guarantee getting a few extra cards from it. Otherwise it is usually easier to hard cast it.
- Like the Elf deck, your best defense against creature sweeping effects is the **Caller of the Claw** – you can simply have a **Wirewood Herald** in play and 3 mana open and your opponent will find it difficult to cast **Wrath of God** against you.
- It is usually best to kill creatures with the Assault rather than firing away at your opponent's life total, at least until you have enough to kill him.



Adding Money to the Deck

Hammer of Bogardan would help a lot in the situations where you have all the land in the world but you still cannot find the Assault. Since they both require triple red it is an easy addition. **Shivan Oasis** would be a helpful addition to the deck on some levels, but I am not entirely sure it would be beneficial given it's drawback since your mana curve is rather solid. This deck tends to do what it needs to without many flashy rares. If you are looking for an outlet for your extra cash – maybe you should look into playing **Clampless-affinity**.



Until next time, **fetch up 6 damage during your upkeep**, every upkeep.

-Nate Heiss
NateHeiss on *Magic Online*



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