

Scott Wills

Monday, July 19, 2004

It's interesting being a writer on this site when Scott Johns gives us the topics for the various theme weeks and initially assigns out which columns will be "on-theme". Often there are several e-mails bouncing back and forth discussing who gets what card for their column and who is involved in the various themes. Unfortunately, the focus I have on Limited play means I often miss out on the various themes. Sure, I get to be part of the gang when something like Mulligan Week comes around but more often than not it's:

"Next week: Angel week!"

"Draft Angels! They're big and they, um, fly!" ... "What do you first pick out of Pristine Angel and Loxodon Mystic?"

Okay, not really a good article there...

"Next week: Sorcery week!"

"Sorceries... well they're spells, and spells make up a crucial part of any draft deck!" "Here's a list of good Sorceries you should draft..."

See my problem? Not exactly inspiring stuff is it?

So this time we have a theme week I can take part in and it's a good one too:

Welcome to Red Week!

There are lots of articles I could have written for red week. '*How to draft red in the current block*', '*Popular red archetypes from the past*' and so on. However rather than give you something to read, I think it's much more fun to give you something to do!

So this week I'm going to resurrect a very popular activity that Randy Buehler first showed way back in February 2002 - Limited Pointing!

For those of you who weren't around back then you're probably wondering what on earth 'Limited Pointing' is. Here's the run-down:

When developing a new set the **Magic** developers sit down and individually rate all of the cards in the set for Limited play. They then average up everyone's ratings to get an overall score, which allows them to see how well they're doing at balancing the set.

To 'point' a card you simply imagine you've opened it up in a sealed deck or in the first pick of a draft and then you give it a rating based on how highly you rate the card, and how much that card would influence your colours.

Here's a quote Randy used from the Developer's Handbook to explain things further:

Given that this is the first card you see (of your 75-card sealed deck or first pack, first pick in draft), how happy are you -- on a scale of 0.0 - 5.0 -- to see it? Furthermore, your ratings should be linear (that is, you'd be just as happy with a 3.5 and a 2.5 or with two 3.0's). Also, to be technically correct, this all assumes that your goal is to win -- winning makes you "happy."

The following elaborations of this scale are merely guidelines, designed to clarify the scale defined above:

5.0: I will always play this card. Period.

4.5: I will almost always play this card, regardless of what else I get.

4.0: I will strongly consider playing this as the only card of its color.

3.5: I feel a strong pull into this card's color.

3.0: This card makes me want to play this color. (Given that I'm playing that color, I will play this card 100% of the time.)

2.5: Several cards of this power level start to pull me into this color. If playing that color, I essentially always play these. (Given that I'm playing that color, I will play this card 90% of the time.)

2.0: If I'm playing this color, I usually play these. (70%)

1.5: This card will make the cut into the main deck about half the times I play this color. (50%)

1.0: I feel bad when this card is in my main deck. (30%)

0.5: There are situations where I might sideboard this into my deck, but I'll never start it. (10%)

0.0: I will never put this card into my deck (main deck or after sideboarding). (0%)

Now obviously these rules don't really apply to artifacts although there are some artifacts in *Mirrodin* block where they could be applicable (I would guess that Crystal Shard might be a 3.2 if considered a blue card for example). Fortunately this is red week not artifact week so that fact doesn't bother us too much today.

This week you get to try your hand at pointing a cross-section of twenty different red cards from *Mirrodin* block. Next week I'll reveal Randy's ratings for the same cards and compare them to your own results

A few words of advice from Randy and some sample ratings:

Everyone always points the cards too high the first time. The average card is probably only a 1.6 or so because you only actually play about half the cards you get in a



booster draft, and much fewer than half the cards you get in a sealed deck. Here are a few sample ratings:

- Masticore: 5.0 – There are very few 5's in the history of the game
- Agonizing Demise: 3.9 – This is about as good as it should get at common. We no longer do cards that point above 4 at common.
- Overrun: 3.5 – Would be higher if it wasn't triple green, of course.
- Mystic Zealot: 2.7
- Barbarian Lunatic: 1.8 – Though some players I respect think this card is worse than I do, and would point it lower.
- Dematerialize: 1.2
- Circle of Protection: Green: 0.6
- Cabal Ritual: 0.0

I'll list the cards you'll be asked to 'point' here so you can have a look through before you start if you desire.

Spikeshot Goblin
Ogre Leadfoot
Goblin Striker
Fists of the Anvil
Slith Firewalker
Grab the Reins
Arc Slogger
War Elemental

Inflame
Barbed Lightning
Fireball
Goblin Archaeologist
Pulse of the Forge
Shunt

Spark Elemental
Rain of Rust
Iron-Barb Hellion
Krank-Clan Engineers
Cosmic Larva
Ion Storm

Click here to take the *Mirrodin* Block Pointing Survey, have fun, and remember to check back next week when you'll get to see just how you stacked up against Randy! In the meantime, why not post your numbers on the message board for this article and see how they compare with the other readers?

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

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

