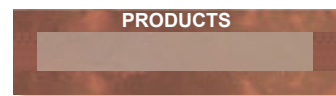


Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



Red Head

Nate Heiss
Building on a Budget
Friday, July 23, 2004



PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

Red week...long have we awaited its arrival. Finally we get to talk about the color that gets to say "Shock you for 2" on the very first turn of the game.

Back in the day, casting **Lightning Bolt** on your opponent on the first turn was a sign that you were a bad player. In fact, "Mountain, Bolt you, go" was often used to describe less experienced tournament players in **Magic's** earliest days. These days it just makes sense (well, okay, you should at least be waiting until the end of their turn). Ah, how the times have changed, Red.

One of my first **Magic** decks I ever made was Red. It was all about **Earth Elemental** and **Fire Elemental**, backed by the all-powerful **Rock Hydra** and its many head counters. It used **Mana Flares** to make a nice mana base for the **Rock Hydras** and **Stream of Life** for that all-important life gain. I didn't think about **Fireball** back then - it probably would have been a little better than **Stream of Life** though! Ah, **Fireball**...Red was certainly one of my favorite colors when I first started playing **Magic**. I since have drifted away from it because I tend to do better with non-Red decks, but I still enjoy building and playing them.



Recently, Red has been Goblinized. I don't know if Goblinized is really a word, but I'm sure Goblins would use it so it's all good. It seems everywhere I look, red is all about the Goblins. Well, I personally have never had much success with Goblins, so my Budget deck is going to be about the other side of Red. No, not Big Red Control, the monsters!

Red has always had a rich history of monsters, from **Rock Hydra** to **Lava Hounds**. Cards like **Magma Giant** and **Crater Hellion** are always lurking in the backdrop in case anyone ever doubts Red's true destructive power. When all the Goblins have been defeated, and everyone thinks Red is out for the count, they will look up to see a **Butcher Orgg** towering over them...but only for about five seconds...Orggs are angry!

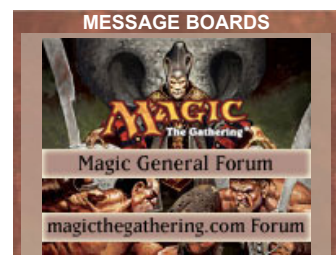
Today's deck pays homage to those monsters we all know and love. Using three in particular – first up is **Slith Firewalker**...an instant classic. The Slith Ability just works so well with Haste and the color of "blocker elimination" that in about a year only the Red Slith will be remembered by the masses. Who hasn't had the frustration of getting pounded into the ground by one, little, measly 6/6 Slith?

Vulshok War Boar, an awesome 5/5 for 4 mana with striking similarities to **Balduvian Hordes** or **Rathi Dragon** (don't forget to vote for [Selecting Ninth Edition!](#)) the War Boar brings the good fight across the table. He says "I'm big, and I'm gonna' get you!" There are not many bigger creatures you can find for 4 mana.

Arc-Slogger, possibly the best Red creature in a long time, picks up any slack. He is a 5 mana 4/5 – a decent deal, but add in his "I got a handful of Shocks" ability, and you will understand why so many people are winning with this card. I can think of few red creatures that were as good to play as this one (**Fireslinger**, **Ball Lightning?**).

Lava Hounds brings up the rear as my classic red monster. This was always one of my favorite red creatures. 4 damage to me and 4 damage to you? Good deal, considering I get a giant hound out of the deal.

Final Wrap-up
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Building on a Budget: Red Head (about 30 tickets)

Main Deck 60 cards		
14 Mountain	4 Slith Firewalker	4 Shrapnel Blast
4 Darksteel Citadel	4 Iron Myr	4 Volcanic Hammer
4 Great Furnace	4 Lava Hounds	2 Beacon of Destruction
22 lands	4 Vulshok War Boar	4 Fireball
	4 Arc-Slogger	4 Magma Jet
	20 creatures	18 other spells

This deck plays out by casting efficient fatties and clearing the way for them with burn. Sometimes you will be able to cast the burn straight at your opponent's dome, but it will usually be a better idea to make a path for your little Slith to grow into a big Slith...or just to hit for an extra 5 with a War Boar. If you are having a tough time deciding if it is better to burn their creature or their face, simply do some math: how much damage will you be able to deal if you **Fireball** them vs. **Fireballing** their creatures. If by **Fireballing** their blocker that would be able to stop and/or trade with your attackers, then you will be able to deal the amount of damage caused by attacking (and perhaps take into consideration the ability to attack again next turn). So, if you have a War Boar and they have a **Razormane Masticore**, you would be better off **Shrapnel Blasting** the Masticore instead of their face since you will be able to swing in for 5 damage anyhow, plus you can swing again later maybe...but at least this way you deal the same amount of damage and don't have to worry about that **Razormane Masticore** anymore.

So, often it is the correct play to remove the blocker with the burn instead of sending it at their face. However, if removing the blocker won't deal more damage, maybe it is time to start burning them out...this is especially true if they are low on life anyhow (10 life or less is a good gauge) or you already have enough heat in hand to finish them off or close.

Tips for Playing the Deck

- **Arc-Slogger** is often best used as a burn spell, and quite a good burn spell at that.
- **Beacon of Destruction** has an awesome interaction with **Arc-Slogger**. You can remove your whole deck from the game with Slogger and then cast a Beacon. What do you think you will draw the next turn?
- Because of the scry ability, it is often correct to **Magma Jet** your opponent for 2 if you have nothing better to target on the second turn (assuming you don't have a Myr or a Slith to play).
- **Fireball** is one of the best weapons you have. Use it wisely...killing 2 1/1's for 4 mana is not an uncommon thing to do.

Adding Money to the Deck



Pulse of the Forge would be a huge addition to this deck. One you master its tricks you can almost kill them with a single Pulse via mana burn tricks. More **Beacon of Destructions** would also be a good add. You can also take a Dragon route with this deck – using **Shivan Dragon** and **Rorix Bladewing** and **Dragonspeaker Shamans** as part of your creature base. Nothing says Red like a **Shivan Dragon**! **Blinkmoth Nexus** is a minor add that would be helpful for solving little problems, not to mention it's another artifact that could be sacrificed once you animate it.

Until next time, may you make **Firebreathing** noises when you attack.

-Nate Heiss
Nate Heiss on **Magic Online**



A great threat that also combos with Beacon!



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