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Results from the Furnace of Rath Challenge



*Adrian Sullivan · Single-Card Strategies
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Last week was Red Week at [magicthegathering.com](#). I was so happy to have a whole week celebrating Red, I hoped I could extend the party just a little bit more by making last week's card the subject of a Reader Challenge. I was sure I was not the only player out there who really likes Red and I made a bet with myself that the challenge would go over well.

First of all, I want to thank you all for the large response to the Reader Challenge! A lot of you came to many of the same conclusions about how to go about building decks for the challenge. This made it pretty difficult to come to a final decision on the best submissions of the three hundred or so decks that I went over. Some of the most zealous readers sent in quite a few decklists and nearly all of the people who had been featured in previous Reader Challenges sent in their own submissions. All told, deciding which Furnace of Rath decks deserved mention was much more difficult than it has been for the previous challenges. Good work, everyone!



I want to thank the many of you that pointed out a few of the mistakes from the original article. **Shriveling Rot**, as many of you pointed out, causes loss of life, and not damage. I misread the card and didn't notice the mistake until later on. Also, many of you noted that the Type 1.5 deck that I used in the article would not be tournament legal since I included 4 **Chrome Mox**. The initial build of the deck had been Type 2, and when I changed it over to include 1.5 cards, I missed that **Chrome Mox** was banned in that format. Once again, thank you all who pointed these misses out.

Now, for the main event!

Honorable Mention: the Brute Force Award

Caleb Hale gets an Honorable Mention this week for his incredibly straightforward approach to the question of **Furnace of Rath**.

Red week RULES!
I've been playing in tournaments and tweaking this deck for a little over a month now. My best finish so far is 2nd (only because of a draw due to time constraints). I love it... two **Shrapnel Blasts** on and it's over before they know what happened... **Blistering Firecat** for 14 is really nice too :-> *evil grin*.

His deck doesn't mess around. It's all about slapping your opponent on the face with damage.



Caleb Hale

60 cards

3 **Darksteel Citadel**
4 **Great Furnace**
14 **Mountain**

21 land

4 **Blistering Firecat**
4 **Arc-Slogger**
4 **Spark Elemental**

12 creatures

3 **Flamebreak**
4 **Pulse of the Forge**
4 **Shrapnel Blast**
4 **Furnace of Rath**
4 **Pyrite Spellbomb**
4 **Seething Song**
4 **Chrome Mox**

27 other spells

His deck is Standard legal. Caleb made his deck before I issued the challenge, and it has seen a bit of trial by fire in tournaments. Almost all of the cards can deal the maximum amount of damage. He also makes good use of mana acceleration with **Chrome Mox** and **Seething Song** to be able to make maximum use of the Furnace.

About the only cards that aren't about maximizing damage are **Flamebreak** and **Spark Elemental**. **Flamebreak** might just be necessary to keep control of the table, but **Spark Elemental** is a bit limited without a **Furnace of Rath** out. Unlike a more traditional Ponza-style control deck, **Spark Elemental** does damage completely under the control of the opponent. If they have a blocker, they can choose to throw it in the way. Against the more aggressive decks, it probably won't be very exciting to just throw a quick 3 at the opponent. At this point, what you've likely accomplished is having to either hold it until after the Furnace hits, or cast it beforehand and get a very minimal effect out of him. Right now, I think a better choice is probably **Magma Jet**. It does a lot less damage per mana, but it can help you find a good burn spell, a **Furnace of Rath**, or a huge damage source while advancing your game.

Still, this deck does the job pretty well even if it is so straightforward. Caleb gets the Honorable Mention.

Third Place: Quad the Damage

One of the big cards that I didn't cover in my article is an innocuous little goblin. Many readers wrote in with their ideas for using it, but one deck, sent in by reader Lucas Smith stood above the others.

Lucas Smith

Quad the Damage!
60 cards

4 **Great Furnace**
14 **Mountain**

18 land

3 **Ball Lightning**
3 **Goblin Matron**
4 **Mogg Maniac**
4 **Raging Goblin**

14 creatures

4 **Chain of Plasma**
4 **Furnace of Rath**
4 **Goblin Grenade**
4 **Shrapnel Blast**
4 **Pyrite Spellbomb**
4 **Seething Song**
4 **Chrome Mox**

28 other spells

His deck is almost legal for extended of Type 1.5, so we'll sculpt it towards that. I'll lean it towards 1.5 as a nod to everyone who mentioned to me that **Chrome Mox** isn't legal in 1.5. First of all, what makes his deck stand apart from the others is the use of many sources of 5 damage and **Goblin Matron** to search out the **Mogg Maniac**. Lucas has this to write about it:

This deck revolves around dropping a **Mogg Maniac** in preparation for **Furnace of Wrath**. Then all you need to do is 5 damage to Maniac and you do 20 to your opponent. **Chain of Plasma** also works wonders on the Maniac.



He's very right about **Chain of Plasma**. With two **Mogg Maniacs** out (and a **Furnace**, of course), a **Chained burn** spell can hit both of them (doubled for 6) which in turn will send the damage back to your opponent (doubled for 12 each!). If we're going to make this deck 1.5 legal, we could also run cards like **Chain Lightning**. **Raging Goblin**, on the other hand, seems like it might be a wee bit disappointing except as **Grenade fodder**, as does **Pyrite Spellbomb**.

We can change **Pyrite Spellbomb** into **Skullclamp**. **Raging Goblin** might be better served as **Mogg Fanatic**. We still have to replace **Chrome Mox**. Here, I'm going to recommend **Sandstone Needle**. In addition, we're low on artifacts, and I think an inclusion of **Mishra's Factory** will do the trick nicely here.

Chris Dembrosky sent in a very similar style of deck, but included something very clever: **Blood Lust**. Essentially the idea is that with a **Furnace of Rath** out, a **Ball Lightning** plus a **Blood Lust** (or, I might add, a **Blood Frenzy**) will be game. In addition, if a **Mogg Maniac**

blocks or is blocked by any creature, you can **Blood Lust** the other creature, dealing at least 5 damage to the Maniac (doubled), which will in turn deal at least 10 to your opponent (doubled again) for the game.

Good work, fellas, in finding such great uses for **Mogg Maniac**!

The finalist: ReplenaRath

This week's finalist is easily the most original deck of the **Furnace of Rath** Challenge. Sent in by Corey Young, he ignores the difficult to cast **Replenish** casting cost by making his design into a **Replenish** deck. In fact, there are a lot of cards in his deck that he simply cannot cast, so he focuses on the pure approach of hitting a **Replenish**. While his deck is not as good a deck to be played anywhere that you might face countermagic or graveyard attack, the concept is really interesting. Here is his list:

Corey Young		
60 cards		
8 Plains	0 creatures	4 Replenish
8 Island		4 Furnace of Rath
4 Glacial Chasm		4 Attunement
20 land		4 Spellshock
		4 Impatience
		4 Manabarbs
		4 Sphere of Law
		4 Breakthrough
		4 Tolarian Winds
		4 Sulfuric Vortex
		40 other spells

He writes this about the deck:

Cast the **Attunement**, or the **Tolarian Winds** to get a bunch of enchantments in the graveyard, which also mills through your deck to get either the **Replenish**, or the **Glacial Chasm**. If things get too hairy, hide behind it until you get some **Furnaces** and **Sulfuric Vortex** in the graveyard. When you do that, cast **Replenish**, and make the opponent's next turn very difficult!

Difficult indeed! After a **Replenish**, it should be downright impossible for an opponent to survive very long at all. One of the coolest things about the deck is the use of **Sphere of Law**. By reducing the damage (before it is doubled) you can potentially be able to shrug off the effects of

all of the crazy red spells. Also great is **Glacial Chasm**, an excellent way to avoid being completely devastated by the opponent (or by yourself!).

Of course, a severe vulnerability to counter-magic and a complete inability to be able to actually cast the Red spells stops me from declaring this deck the winner (though I really wanted to). Perhaps using cards like **Orim's Chant** or **Abeyance** would be one step in helping the deck out. Another step would be to include some Red mana sources. It wouldn't be too terribly difficult to simply include **Shivan Reef** or **Plateau** (depending on what you can play with). The sheer inventiveness of the deck does gain it enough notice for a second place, however.

The Winner: Repercussion/Furnace

Roland from Berlin, Germany had a casual multi-player deck that was really excellent. Like Chris and Lucas, he built one of the best decks that many readers pointed out could take great advantage of what **Furnace of Rath** does: **Repercussion**.

Here is his list:

Roland		
60 cards		
4 Forgotten Cave 19 Mountain	1 Subterranean Spirit 1 creature	4 Furnace of Rath 4 Repercussion 4 Flame Burst (for more Oldschool Fun 4 Kindle) 4 Lightning Bolt 4 Caltrops 4 Cave-In 4 Fireblast 4 Steam Blast 2 Mogg Infestation 2 Slice and Dice
23 land		36 other spells

He writes:

The "Perfect Game" for this deck is:

1st Turn: watch your opponents put creatures into play

2nd Turn: see above

3rd Turn: Play **Repercussion**

4th Turn: Play **Furnace of Rath**, Pitch a red Card for **Cave-In**.

Now for some fancy Maths, just in case you don't like to do it yourself. **Cave-In** deals 2 to each creature & player. With **Furnace** it means 4 damage on each creature and player. 4 damage to a creature means 4 damage to a player, which is doubled of course, because of **Furnace**. In conclusion: If an opponent has 2 creatures in play and everything is dealt 2 damage then he is dealt $4+2*4+2*4 = 20$ damage. Not enough to take a Two-Headed Giant, it's enough for regular Planeswalkers. I hope you find this deck at least creative for a burn deck.

This is just a great idea. One of the things that I really like about his deck is that he also uses **Steam Blast** to do the same job as **Cave-In**. **Pyroclasm** can do the same trick, but you'd need to have everyone have *three* creatures out. One of the other really neat tricks in the deck is **Mogg Infestation**. **Mogg Infestation** not only answers the problem of a big creature getting out of control, but it also makes any single creature into *two* creatures. Now if they didn't have enough for the combo to kill them before, they do! This idea is probably the big one that made Roland's deck stand out. By also including **Steam Blast**, I definitely felt that he had won the crown this week.

Flame Burst and Caltrops both seem a little bit weak to me, on the other hand. Flame Burst can be replaced by Magma Jet almost immediately. I can't say enough positive things about the Scry mechanic here in this kind of deck. Caltrops, on the other hand, really feels like it should be replaced by nearly anything. I could easily see it replaced by anything from Powder Keg (to control creatures) to Ensnaring Bridge (to ignore creatures) to Cursed Scroll (for creature and player hitting). Regardless, good work Roland!

Wrapping Up

Thanks to everyone who submitted a deck to the challenge. I always look forward to seeing what everyone comes up with, and each time that I hope to be surprised you all rise to the challenge. I hope you all enjoyed my little "extension" of Red week. I know that I did.

Have a great week, everyone!



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