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The Uyo Challenge



Adrian Sullivan · Single-Card Strategies
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It's been about two months since the [last card Challenge](#) and about seven months since [the very first Challenge](#). As a whole, it's been a very popular aspect of the column and I'm glad that you've enjoyed participating. Back in that first Challenge, I asked what everyone thought of it, and there was a pretty strong positive reaction. Judging from the number of decks that I've been sent, I'd have to guess that you still think so.

Maybe it was the influence of Combo Week. Maybe not. Many of you must have been wracking your brains to come up with the best combo to take the Challenge with. Even though it wasn't necessary to build a combo deck, very nearly every submission was a combo, but given the card you had to work with that shouldn't come as too much of a surprise. It was especially hard this time around to decide which of the decks I thought really had a clear advantage over the other submissions. I used the same criteria that I've used in the past:

- Decks that focus on doing something and do it well
- Decks that have that little extra creativity or innovation
- And, in a pinch, whichever person gets me the e-mail first



So, without further ado, let's get to it!

Honorable Mention – Wishing Prophet

Matthew K-H came in with his multi-faceted submission. I might have given him a higher placing purely off of being an interesting submission, but his deck is trying to do so many things at once, I am going to have to split the difference and award it the Honorable Mention prize.

Wishing Prophet		
Matthew K-H		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
7 Forest	4 Living Wish	1 Azusa, Lost but Seeking
2 Great Furnace	4 Burning Wish	1 Dosan the Falling Leaf
4 Island	2 Call of the Herd	1 Eternal Witness
3 Karplusan Forest	3 Journey of Discovery	1 Meloku the Clouded Mirror
5 Mountain	1 Nostalgic Dreams	1 Nantuko Cultivator
2 Tree of Tales	3 Shrapnel Blast	1 Uyo, Silent Prophet
1 Yavimaya Coast	3 Browbeat	1 Waterfront Bouncer
	1 Time Warp	1 Book Burning
24 land	2 Seismic Assault	1 Browbeat
	4 Horn of Greed	

3 Azusa, Lost but Seeking	27 other spells	1 Fireball
3 Eternal Witness		1 Nostalgic Dreams
3 Uyo, Silent Prophet		2 Time Warp
		1 Boseiju, Who Shelters All
9 creatures		1 Dust Bowl
		15 sideboard cards

Okay, wow is there a lot going on here. He has “[Turbo-land](#)” going with 3 Azusa and 4 [Living Wish](#) to find Azusa and combo with [Horn of Greed](#). He can copy [Shrapnel Blast](#) for the kill. He has a versatile controlling deck which can use Wishes to find the appropriate card to finish things off. Aside from all of that he also uses [Seismic Assault](#).

What this deck needs to decide is what it wants to do. Does it want to focus on combo? Which combo? As an honorable mention, I use this deck because much of its ideas are present in the other three decks I'm going to feature – they however focus more on what they are trying to accomplish. This deck looks like it probably has a lot going for it, but it just needs to be nudged more clearly in one direction or another.

Third Place – Seismic Uyo

Michael Howell's deck is built using one of the ideas I showcased in the original article, [Seismic Assault](#).

Seismic Uyo		
Michael Howell		
60 cards		
2 Plains	4 Budoka Gardener	4 Seismic Assault
4 Mountain	4 Sakura-Tribe Elder	4 Kodama's Reach
3 Island	3 Uyo, Silent Prophet	4 Naturalize
14 Forest	3 Azusa, Lost but Seeking	3 Journey of Discovery
	4 Birds of Paradise	4 Ghostly Prison
23 land	18 creatures	19 other spells

The deck only runs 23 lands, but it more than adds on the mana with 4 Birds and 11 land-searching spells. That is a lot of mana. Michael has this to say about the deck:

You should be able to search out the 2 Islands and 3 Mountains you need pretty quickly with all the land searching. You can use the [Budoka Gardener](#) to put the additional land from [Kodama's Reach](#) into play, or use it if you need to after using Uyo's ability (Gardener is not meant to be flipped in this deck). You can search out a plains and cast [Ghostly Prison](#) as control against aggressive builds - maybe this shouldn't be main deck, but I was trying to consider the metagame. [Ghostly Prison](#) works well with [Seismic Assault](#) - once they have committed their mana to attacking and not casting a spell, you can discard a land from your hand to take out their creature.

The kill card is [Journey of Discovery](#) once you have 7 mana open, and [Seismic Assault](#) and Uyo are in play. Cast [Journey of Discovery](#) for 3 (putting 2 lands into your hand) and copy it twice. You'll put 6 lands in your hand from the spells, plus 4 from the board, giving you the 10 you need for the kill.

A pretty straightforward plan.

Overall, I think the first thing that needs to happen is the removal of [Naturalize](#). As it is, this is a Standard deck, and the deck really just needs to spend some time surviving while it gets the combo off. A great potential choice here is [Magma Jet](#). Not only does [Magma Jet](#) kill creatures, but it also helps you find more of the combo. If you feel like you need to run something to keep a permanent off the table, consider [Echoing Truth](#).

[Ghostly Prison](#) is a fine choice to slow down an attacker. For another option, consider [Beacon of Creation](#). The Beacon keeps you in a single color and can make an army of blockers with all of the mana production you have. Copying a Beacon is reasonably snazzy too.

Overall though, this deck does its job in a quite straightforward manner. Good work, Michael.

The Finalist – Controlling Combo

Controlling combo decks have always been a favorite of mine since the good old **High Tide** days. Greg Jacob has presented a controlling combo deck that uses **Cunning Wishes** to go for the kill. Here's what he has to say about the deck:

It's a simple combo deck. The combo is an infinite mana engine using **Uyo**, **Silent Prophet**, **Heartbeat of Spring** and **Journey of Discovery**. I've added a bunch of Extended legal support cards but the combo is in Standard so it could be done in Standard. I'm sure the combo is fairly obvious but, here goes. With **Uyo** and **Heartbeat of Spring** in play you cast **Journey of Discovery** to put two lands into play, then tap two lands for 4 mana and return them to hand to copy, netting 2 mana, resolve the copy, tap the lands put into play to make a copy and return them to hand, gaining 2 mana. Repeat as needed. When you have enough mana you **Cunning Wish** for another **Cunning Wish** a few hundred times and cast **Brain Freeze** or **Hunting Pack** to finish.

Uyo's Journey	
Greg Jacob	
Main Deck	Sideboard
60 cards	
12 Forest	4 Naturalize
12 Island	1 Capsize
24 land	1 Moment's Peace
4 Birds of Paradise	1 Evacuation
4 Uyo, Silent Prophet	1 Accumulated Knowledge
8 creatures	1 Brain Freeze
4 Journey of Discovery	1 Intuition
4 Heartbeat of Spring	1 Hunting Pack
4 Brainstorm	1 Whispers of the Muse
4 Cunning Wish	1 Oxidize
3 Intuition	1 Mana Leak
3 Counterspell	1 Counterspell
3 Accumulated Knowledge	
3 Mana Leak	
28 other spells	15 sideboard cards

Overall, this deck has excellent execution. I do think that some of the **Wish** targets could be looked into a bit more. I would probably keep the 4 **Accumulated Knowledge** in the main deck and put a **Flash of Insight** into the sideboard to **Wish** for if you want more card drawing. One of the great things about doing this is that you can actually get rid of one of the cards from your actual library to **Wish** for again.

Brain Freeze seems like a good card to use for the kill, and with an **Inspiration** or something similar in the sideboard, you can force a kill immediately. **Inspiration** doubles as another potential card drawer, even if it is fairly inefficient.

Another good pair of cards to consider for the sideboard would be **Stifle** and **Forbid**. Both of these cards can be really useful to **Wish** for in a pinch. In the main deck, I'm not sure if I can agree with **Mana Leak** in a deck that is going to put out **Heartbeat of Spring**. Other options that are probably worth considering are **Hinder**, **Memory Lapse**, and **Rewind**.

Good job, Greg!

The Challenge Champion – Choose Your Poison

This one comes from fozz2961, and while the deck is probably a bit less honed than Greg's build, it is still seriously impressive in the creativity department. fozz2961 says this about his submission:

Cast **Gifts Ungiven** for **Tooth and Nail**, **Fireball**, **Memnarch**, and **Blaze**. You can **Tooth and Nail** Entwined and doubled with **Uyo** for 4 **Kokusho**. You can **Fireball** or


Blaze for 7 tripled with Uyo. Leave your opponent permanentless with Memnarch.

Choose your poison, really... Here is the list:

Choose Your Poison

fooz2961
60 cards

10 Forest	2 Meloku the Clouded	4 Gifts Ungiven
10 Island	Mirror	4 Serum Visions
1 Mountain	3 Uyo, Silent Prophet	4 Heartbeat of Spring
2 Swamp	3 Azusa, Lost but Seeking	3 Journey of Discovery
	4 Sakura-Tribe Elder	2 Time of Need
23 land	4 Kokusho, the Evening	1 Tooth and Nail
	Star	1 Fireball
	1 Memnarch	1 Blaze
	17 creatures	20 other spells

 The thing I like most about this deck is that it has such a unique path to victory. Copying a **Tooth and Nail** to get 4 Kokusho is an awesome way to get a victory. Even without that happening, all of the mana in the deck means that you're very likely to be able to simply cast one of the big threats. Azusas and Meloku work great together!

The deck could stand a little tweaking. With **Time of Need**, you have access to **Dosan the Falling Leaf** to stop people from being able from interfering with you having a combo. As for **Gifts Ungiven**, four is probably a little too much. If a few were dropped and **Eternal Witness** was included, you could have a potent way to get the cards that your opponent didn't give you with the initial **Gifts Ungiven**.

Wrapping Up

All in all, great work everyone. My own Uyo deck got some commentary from Turboland creator Zvi Mowshowitz. Essentially, he thought that the deck was probably a bit land-light. With all of the cards that bring land back to the hand and all of the cards there to exploit putting land into play, he felt like I should be running more land in the first place. Azusa and **Exploration** don't do very much work if you don't have any land in your hand.

In a sense, I see what he's saying, but I also think that the large amount of card-drawing possibilities might make this not as much of a big deal. I like using **Intuition**, **Accumulated Knowledge** and **Nostalgic Dreams**, but he insists that more land is the answer.

What do you think?

- More land
- More card drawing
-

Thank you for trying to settle the discussion for Zvi and me, and thank you for your submissions. I look forward to seeing you next week with something entirely different!

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