

# Something Not In *Unhinged*...

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## Before We Start...

The results of the new name for the "Type 1.5" format is in, and the winner is **Legacy**. Get used to seeing it!

Here are the results:

What should be the new name of Type 1.5?		
Legacy	2963	25.5%
Traditional	2708	23.3%
Renaissance	1858	16.0%
Heritage	1207	10.4%
Throwback	655	5.6%
Ageless	572	4.9%
Comprehensive	558	4.8%
Timeless	544	4.7%
Mosaic	368	3.2%
Enduring	187	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11620</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

I got a lot of email about why certain options were not listed in the poll, so I want to clear that stuff up.

- **Open** and **Classic** are names of formats on *Magic Online*, and these formats are structured differently than 1.5, so these names are off limits.
- **Eternal** and **Composite** are names of ratings categories that the DCI uses, and for that reason these names are off limits as well.
- **Vintage Restricted** was mentioned a lot, but it makes no sense for the format with a Restricted List to be called "Vintage," and the format without one to be called "Vintage Restricted."
- Words with negative connotations, either subtle or overt, like **Confined** and **Antiquated** were not given serious consideration by the selection committee.
- Words that no one would know were generally not given consideration, even if they would have made sense from a strict definition standpoint, like **Amaranthine**.
- Finally, while we all had a good laugh over goofy names like **Overextended** and **Hyper-Extended**, we would like the format to be taken seriously.

That left us with what you saw in the poll last week. I do think the winner is fitting, and we'll all be comfortable with it in no time.

## The Windup

If you read my article "A-Proxy-Mation" about the methods of making playtest cards here in R&D, you'll recall that we have access to **Magic** cards with normal backs and plain white fronts on which we can write whatever we want.

I'm a visual-minded person, so I like my hand-written proxies to be legible across the table and to have some clear indicator of color. Almost two years ago, back when *Mirror* and *Darksteel* were in development and I was still working as Content Manager for this website, I bought a sweet 12-pack of

various colored Sharpie markers at Target. The cool part was that there was a bonus silver Sharpie thrown in for free!

Simple things amuse me, and I was very happy to own all these Sharpies. I was carrying around a Future Future League deck in my bag at the time (a bad *Onslaught-Mirrodin* red-green land destruction deck), and when I got home that night, I took out the cards and started doodling on them with my new pens. Here are three examples of my handiwork:



I had no motives for making the cards look that way, just some spare time and some cool pens. I took the deck back to work the next day and played it a few times in R&D. The deck ended up doing poorly, but what did strike me was how nice my hand-drawn cards looked on the table.

## The Pitch

During this time, Mark Rosewater was starting up the design of *Unhinged* in earnest, and was asking anyone and everyone for wacky ideas for the set. I asked if the set was going to have token cards in it (like *Unglued's* Sheep token, for example), but Mark said no, tokens were under the jurisdiction of the **Magic** Player Rewards program.

I pulled out my little drawings and showed them to him. "Maybe we should do something like this, ♦?" I said. "Cards with all art and no text box. ♦?" Both he and Randy Buehler liked the idea and put it on their list of stuff to work into the set.

The cards sounded good in theory. There would be five of them--one per color--and they'd be black bordered so as to be legal in tournament play. Like the token cards and the basic lands did for *Unglued*, these cards would give even serious tournament players a reason to be intrigued by *Unhinged*.

Because very little relevant game information would be on the cards, we'd stick to instants and sorceries so that these textless cards weren't hanging out in play. The problem was finding the right five cards.



Because these cards would have nothing on them that would indicate how they played--not even a card type--the spells chosen had to be very well known by **Magic** players of every skill level. For red, Shock seemed like a great choice. Giant Growth was the most well known green spell, but it was a little lackluster since it rarely shows up in competitive decks. After that, pickings got thin. We could choose cards that people knew, or cards that were in Standard at the time, but the overlap wasn't great. And white proved to be particularly problematic. The most well known white spells tend to be rare (like Wrath of God) or not really white any more (like Disenchant), and we weren't happy doing either. And yes, Swords to Plowshares did come up as an option. But really, what percentage of current players know what Swords to Plowshares does without being able to read it? The number is lower than you'd think.

Because *Unhinged* was meant for the entire **Magic** audience, both new and enfranchised, the idea of textless spells was a poor fit because they couldn't serve both audiences well. Cards that new players knew well enough to not need to read would not be very exciting as promos for older players. And cards that older players liked would be baffling to new players without words. So sadly, the idea was scrapped.

## Dusting Them Off

Months later, Randy Buehler was at a tournament team meeting when people from organized play started prodding him for ideas for new token cards to give away for Player Rewards. Randy knew that the quality of token creatures had gone down since the days of *Odyssey* and *Onslaught*--how compelling is a Pentavite card, really?--and told the team that there just weren't that many good token-makers in *Champions of Kamigawa*. But--aha!--he had a solution. What if, instead of token cards, Player Rewards gave away textless spells? We had the idea in our back pockets with no other good place to use it, and Player Rewards seemed like the perfect fit.

Because players that receive cards as part of Player Rewards have, by default, played in at least five tournaments recently, the barrier of knowing what textless spells did would be lessened, especially if the cards chosen were from the current Standard environment. While not every **Magic** player knows what Oxidize does by heart, anyone that has played Standard recently sure does.

## They Exist

Organized Play liked the idea and went ahead with it. Five cards were chosen, and **Magic** art director Jeremy Cranford commissioned them to be done in a style that fits with *Champions of Kamigawa*, even though the cards themselves may be from other sets. Many of you have received the Terror in the mail (or saw them in this popular **Magic** Arcana), so here's a look at another from the series, Oxidize:



If you play one of these against an opponent that doesn't know the card, call over a judge or find a copy of the regular version. Note that the problem of unreadable cards is an old one--foreign cards have been tournament-legal forever, and often you can't even make out the name on those! Somehow we all survive, however, and I imagine these textless spells are going to go over big. Assuming they do, we'll be making new ones every year.

We'll keep making token cards as well, and mixing those in with the Player Rewards cards when they're relevant. There's a *Kamigawa* Spirit token floating around that works with *Honden of Life's Web*, *Dripping-Tongue Zuberu*, and *Forbidden Orchard*.

The irony of Player Rewards taking the tokens from *Unhinged* and then taking the thing that was meant to replace the tokens from *Unhinged* is not lost on me. Luckily, *Unhinged* still has its own beautiful basic lands that are legal in sanctioned play.

### This Week's Poll:

A quick change of the subject. The recent Extended Pro Tour in Columbus was an amazing thing to watch from my perspective, as the format was the most diverse I'd ever seen in Constructed. Everything was there... madness, reanimator, affinity, burn... heck, this is the first time multiple copies of Plains have showed up in a Top 8 in at least the last four Extended PTs! It feels like any deck can win, giving rogue deckbuilders hope, but the openness of the format means that it is awfully hard to prepare fully for everything you'll see.

The question is:

**What kind of Constructed format do you like best?**

- A wide open one where any deck can win.
- A more predictable format that I can metagame and prepare for.
- I don't play competitive Constructed.

