

Saviors Complete Draft Walkthrough Search

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For those that hadn't read elsewhere, Content Manager Scott Johns has been giving the writers a chance to pick the theme weeks. When I picked "Rainbow Week", for my column I wanted to try a little draft experiment this week while also following up slightly on the topics from the last two weeks. For this one, I wanted to have a try at drafting some multi-colour green decks to tie in with the Rainbow Week theme. As I've been talking about the differences between beatdown, control and mid-range decks the last couple of weeks, and as the multi-colour green decks naturally tend to be mid-range decks I thought it would make a nice combination.



So this draft will be a little different. The plan is to force green, grab as many mana-fixers as possible and splash my way to victory! Hopefully the deck will end up green-x with four or maybe five colours and we'll see whether a rainbow deck is actually draftable in this format.

That's the *plan* at least... let's see if it works!

Champions Pack



Pack 1, Pick 1: Lava Spike, Eye of Nowhere, Orochi Ranger, Devouring Greed, Call to Glory, Devouring Rage, Deathcurse Ogre, Silent-Chant Zubera, Battle-Mad Ronin, Consuming Vortex, Moss Kami, Bloodthirsty Ogre, Guardian of Solitude, Otherworldly Journey.

My Pick:

Well, not the worst pack to start with if I'm planning on going green. Only Consuming Vortex is close to Moss Kami here and I'd rather take the 5/5 Trampler as a first pick every time. There's also no other good green cards in the pack which means it might be possible to cut the colour this pack and get some nice stuff in pack two.

Pack 1, Pick 2: Kitsune Diviner, Akki Avalanchers, Thoughtbind, Sakura-Tribe Elder, Wicked Akuba, Indomitable Will, Lifted by Clouds, Dripping-Tongue Zuberu, Soulless Revival, Yamabushi's Flame, Soratami Mirror-Guard, Sosuke, Son of Seshiro, Cloudcrest Lake, Numai Outcast

My Pick:

Well so much for the plan of cutting the green! I'd really, really like to take the Elder here but the other cards are too good to ignore. After the Moss Kami first pick I'd take Sosuke over the Mirror-Guard if the choice only included those two cards, but the Yamabushi's Flame complicates things further! If I take that, then I'm passing two good green cards, which isn't ideal, but the Flame is easily the best card. It's also splashable, and excellent removal, and as I'm planning on playing a multi-colour deck so both of those points mean it'll almost certainly be played. It's probably the best card in the pack and it gets my vote.

Pack 1, Pick 3: Venerable Kumo, Cruel Deceiver, Kitsune Healer, Yamabushi's Storm, Sift Through Sands, Kashi-Tribe Warriors, Joyous Respite, Ashen-Skin Zuberu, Pious Kitsune, Mothrider Samurai, Kumano's Pupils, Petals of Insight, Samurai Enforcers.

My Pick:

From a great pack to a very mediocre one. The choice here is Mothrider Samurai or Petals of Insight. In terms of power I rate the two cards pretty close to each other. Some decks I'd prefer one, some I'd prefer the other. Petals is a better splash card perhaps, but my personal experiences with it haven't been that great. I also really don't like green-blue personally as a potential main combination, whereas I don't mind green-white too much at all. A base green-white deck can be fine as long as you have the flyers to back up your ground guys. You always have superior combat tricks and it's a workable combination as long as you don't run into creatures like Ghost-Lit Raider. I go with the Samurai for this reason.

Pack 1, Pick 4: Cursed Ronin, Harsh Deceiver, Stone Rain, Sift Through Sands, Vine Kami, Terashi's Cry, Peer Through Depths (Foil), Peer Through Depths, Struggle for Sanity, Strength of Cedars, Honor-Worn Shaku, Uba Mask.

My Pick:

Not much to say about this pick, an amazing green card that's a bit of gift for a fourth pick in a weak pack like this one.

Pack 1, Pick 5: Hundred-Talon Kami, Reach Through Mists, Kami of the Hunt, Gibbering Kami, Silent-Chant Zuberu, Ember-Fist Zuberu, Field of Reality, Kami of Ancient Law, Aura of Dominion, Blood Speaker, Hisoka, Minamo Sensei.

My Pick:

A bit of a tough one here, as there are several playable cards in green and white. Hundred-Talon Kami might look to be the best pick, but green-white decks typically have the top end of their curve filled

with the bigger green creatures. What they often lack however are the good two-drops to be competitive in the early game. There are also plenty of enchantments in the format such as the Hondens, the Genjus and all the blue and white removal enchantments, and the Kami's ability often comes into play. The Kami of Ancient Law is the best pick here as a result.

Pack 1, Pick 6: Hisoka's Guard, Orochi Sustainer, Villainous Ogre, Uncontrollable Anger, Thoughtbind, Desperate Ritual, Wandering Ones, Joyous Respite, Soilshaper, Ghostly Prison.

My Pick:

It's a slightly tough choice between the Sustainer and the Soilshaper as the Ghostly Prison isn't even playable in this deck. If this deck ends up being base green and white, there's no real way of determining how spirit heavy it will be. Sometimes you get a lot of Spirits, other times it's all Foxes and Samurai. Mana acceleration however is always useful, and this sort of deck really benefits from it. Dropping Mothrider Samurais on turn three is very good, and the Sustainer is the better choice right here in my opinion.

Pack 1, Pick 7: Humble Budoka, Hearth Kami, Reach Through Mists, Serpent Skin, Wear Away, Ragged Veins, Quiet Purity, Mothrider Samurai, Ore Gorger.

My Pick:

Not a tough one to choose from. Serpent Skin is playable but the Samurai is clearly the superior card.

Pack 1, Pick 8: Soul of Magma, Counsel of the Soratami, Uncontrollable Anger, Midnight Covenant, Ethereal Haze, Crushing Pain, Tranquil Garden, Initiate of Blood.

My Pick:

While there are some playable cards in this pack, it seems likely that this deck is going to end up green and white. The Flame at least will almost certainly be splashed and that makes the best pick from this pack the Tranquil Garden. Mana fixers like these make splashing a lot easier and it's a card that will almost certainly make it into the main deck whereas all the other picks probably wouldn't.

Late Picks:

Orochi Ranger, Cloudcrest Lake, Kitsune Healer, Honor-Worn Shaku, Reach Through Mists x 2, Joyous Respite

The last few packs are very easy this draft. No real late pick gifts but a few cards that could be playable depending on the final make-up of the deck.

After pack one the playable cards amount to:

1CC:

2CC: Orochi Sustainer, Kami of Ancient Law, Orochi Ranger,

3CC: Yamabushi's Flame

4CC: Kitsune Healer, Mothrider Samurai x 2

5CC: Strength of Cedars

6+CC: Moss Kami

Lands: Cloudcrest Lake, Tranquil Garden.

Not quite the rainbow deck I was hoping for with zero mana fixers in pack one. The only possible pick was the Sakura-Tribe Elder in pack two, but the Flame really was the better pick there, even for the deck I hoped to draft. Just have to see if the multi-colour plan becomes viable in the next couple of packs.

The card pool so far is ok, with a few good early drops, flyers and removal. No complaints there. It'd still be nice to pick up a few mana-fixers later on, and if any great blue cards get opened I'd consider splashing for those with the aid of the Lake as well.

Betrayers Pack



Pack 2, Pick 1: Ninja of the Deep Hours, Scaled Hulk, Skullmane Baku, Hundred-Talon Strike, Goblin Cohort, Shimmering Glasskite, Akki Blizzard-Herder, Veil of Secrecy, Vital Surge, Bile Urchin, Mending Hands, Shuko, Kitsune Palliator, Scourge of Numai, Oyobi, Who Split the Heavens.

My Pick:

Always nice to open some ridiculous rare in your colours! There aren't even any other cards that I'd really want either, so it's lucky that the rare was present. This is the sort of card green decks really like – they're able to use their early mana accelerators to play this out a little sooner than normal and then just ride it to victory.

Pack 2, Pick 2: Kami of Tattered Shoji, Torrent of Stone, Child of Thorns, Skullsnatcher, Moonlit Strider, Ire of Kaminari, Phantom Wings, Petalmane Baku, Crawling Filth, Terashi's Grasp, Ronin Cliffriider, Forked-Branch Garami, Ashen Monstrosity, Neko-Te.

My Pick:

One of the tougher picks in the draft this one. Neko-Te is liked by a lot of people, and in some decks it certainly can be insane. Very few decks have main-deck answers to it, which effectively means any time you block a creature you take it out of the game. If you can combine it with cards like Frostwielder or Soul of Magma the game will soon be over. However for this deck I don't think it's the right pick. This deck should hopefully have the superior creatures anyway, and shouldn't need Neko-Te to swing things around. The choice therefore is either Forked-Branch Garami or Torrent of Stone. Both would be excellent additions to the deck, but as I already have the Yamabushi's Flame I want to

splash for, I think the Torrent is the better choice. The Garami is a great card too, but when in doubt, take the removal spell.

Pack 2, Pick 3: Frost Ogre, Ribbons of the Reikai, Skullmane Baku, Waxmane Baku, Frostling, Akki Blizzard-Herder, Minamo's Meddling, Uproot, Stir the Grave, Silverstorm Samurai, Scour, Flames of the Blood Hand, Kami of the Honored Dead.

My Pick:

Third pick Waxmane Baku is nice, and an immediate addition to this deck. It looks like I'll be trying for a Spirit/Arcane theme after all with this card plus Oyobi as well. It would've been nice to have that Garami from the last pack but Torrent is still Arcane anyway so it would still be my choice.

Pack 2, Pick 4: Teardrop Kami, Roar of Jukai, Split-Tail Miko, Blademane Baku, Mistblade Shinobi, Kumano's Blessing, Toils of Night and Day, Bile Urchin, Heart of Light, Genju of the Spires, Aura Barbs, Goryo's Vengeance.

My Pick:

Hmm, I was hoping for something a little better here. Still no other great splashable cards coming along really. It would be nice to play the Genju but this deck will probably only run three or four mountains which doesn't make it particularly playable. The best card here is the Split-Tail Miko, which will hopefully give this deck an added advantage in creature wars, which I'm sure there'll be plenty of.

Pack 2, Pick 5: Psychic Spear, Waxmane Baku, Goblin Cohort, Teardrop Kami, Harbinger of Spring, Minamo's Meddling, Traproot Kami, Blessing of Leeches, Takeno's Cavalry, First Volley, Heed the Mists.

My Pick:

Another easy scoop here. The only thing better than a Waxmane Baku is more Waxmane Bakus. If you ever get two in play at the same time you can't usually fail to win, as so many spells you cast give you a free attack phase. Another great addition to the deck.

Pack 2, Pick 6: Skullsnatcher, Frost Ogre, Harbinger of Spring, Psychic Spear, Kumano's Blessing, Veil of Secrecy, Stir the Grave, Mending Hands, Three Tragedies, Kami of the Honored Dead.

My Pick:

A little disappointing this pack. I don't think Frost Ogre is splashable here with its double-red casting cost and the only other card that might be playable is Mending Hands. That's an ok little card, but not something I expect to be playing in this deck. With the double Waxmane I really want my spells to be Arcane in nature. As I don't care about that card, I instead hate-draft the best card from the pack: Three Tragedies. This card is almost a bomb now that we have the 'hand size matters' set, and is not something I want to be playing against with my deck full of expensive cards.

Pack 2, Pick 7: Bile Urchin, Quillmane Baku, Roar of Jukai, First Volley, Uproot, Call for Blood, Takeno's Cavalry, Body of Jukai, Mannichi, the Fevered Dream.

My Pick:

Not a lot to chose from here really. First Volley is a possible choice but it's not really powerful enough to consider as a splash card. Roar of Jukai is a fine card and may well make it into the main deck.

Pack 2, Pick 8: Kami of Tattered Shoji, Frostling, Ribbons of the Reikai, Crack the Earth, Floodbringer, Blessing of Leeches, Crack the Earth (Foil), Stream of Consciousness.

My Pick:

Once again, the Frostling could be splashed but it's not a good idea really. You really need it to come down on turn one and beat for a few points before killing something or trading for a 2/2 to get the most from it. As a splash card that won't happen very reliably.

Late picks: Mending Hands, Uproot, Terashi's Grasp, Heart of Light, Takeno's Cavalry, 2 x Harbinger of Spring.

Nothing great late. I take the Mending Hands here to replace the earlier one passed. The Uproot is an answer to the Genju that got passed around and so was worth considering. Similarly, the Heart of Light makes an okay sideboard card too. It probably isn't main-deck worthy as it gives the opponent an invulnerable blocker which might be annoying for the green creatures in the deck, but it can be an answer to threats like Ghost-Lit Raider.

The playable cards now amount to:

- 1CC:** Mending Hands
- 2CC:** Orochi Sustainer, Kami of Ancient Law, Orochi Ranger, Split-Tail Miko
- 3CC:** Yamabushi's Flame, Waxmane Baku x 2, Roar of Jukai
- 4CC:** Kitsune Healer, Mothrider Samurai x 2, Torrent of Stone,
- 5CC:** Strength of Cedars, Kami of Tattered Shoji
- 6+CC:** Moss Kami, Oyobi, Who Split the Heavens
- Lands:** Cloudcrest Lake, Tranquil Garden.

So much for the multi-colour plan. With no mana fixers at this stage and no other cards that warrant splashing it looks like this deck will be solid green-white, splash red. Nothing wrong with that though, the overall card quality is pretty high and there's still a pack to go. The double Waxmane and the Oyobi means an extra focus on Arcane & Spirit in the next pack. It would be nice to find a mana fixer or accelerant as well. It's also a useful lesson, as in most cases no matter how much you come in planning to force a certain strategy, there will definitely be times when the actual picks offer something better if you can recognize the opportunity. It's okay to come in with a plan, but there's no reason to let that plan blind you.

Saviors Pack



Pack 3, Pick 1: Okina Nightwatch, Raving Oni-Slave, Cowed by Wisdom, Akki Drillmaster, Oppressive Will, Elder Pine of Jukai, Gnat Miser, Kitsune Bonsetter, Glitterfang, Cut the Earthly Bond, Promised Kannushi, Ebony Owl Netsuke, Nikko-Onna, Ghost-Lit Raider, Infernal Kirin.

My Pick:

Well, two amazing three-drop Spirits to consider here. The Elder-Pine would certainly help find the Mountains for the red splash but the Raider is just amazing if it comes into play. They're both spirits so no difference there. There is the possibility of Channeling the Raider as an additional removal spell and then Soulshifting it back. If the deck had any Soulshift that is. If they're dealt with then there's no real difference between them, however if they're not dealt with the Raider is considerably more dominating. If this deck were red-green I'd take the Raider immediately, but it's the fact that it's in the splash colour that hurts it. It's too good to pass up though, and I finally decide on the Raider as my choice. Annoying to have to pass up the mana-fixer but there we go.

Pack 3, Pick 2: Shinen of Stars' Light, Spiraling Embers, Minamo Scrollkeeper, Nightsoil Kami, Sink into Takenuma, Kitsune LoReweaver, Plow Through Reito, Ronin Cavekeeper, Cut the Earthly Bond, Sakura-Tribe Scout, Kuro's Taken, Feral Lightning, Kiri-Onna, Descendant of Masumaro

My Pick:

Another great card to add to the splash. Would've been nice to have this alongside the Elder-Pine but never mind. It's Arcane, it's removal, and it can kill your opponent. Nothing more to see here, move along please.

Pack 3, Pick 3: Akki Underling, Shinen of Flight's Wings, Fiddlehead Kami, Death Denied, Shinen of Stars' Light, Deathknell Kami, Plow Through Reito, Glitterfang, Ideas Unbound, Matsu-Tribe Birdstalker, Dense Canopy, Hand of Cruelty, Soratami Cloud Chariot.

My Pick:

Not a lot of on-colour stuff here really, and I think the Cloud Chariot makes the best choice for this deck. It can send Moss Kamis to the air, and it completely shuts down the combat step if you can get this in play with some spare mana. It gives this deck a good route to victory in the late game and is a good pick for this deck.

Pack 3, Pick 4: Inner Calm, Outer Strength, Torii Watchward, Shinen of Fury's Fire, Moonbow Illusionist, Shinen of Life's Roar, Shinen of Fear's Chill, Spiritual Visit, Path of Anger's Flame, Dreamcatcher, Matsu-Tribe Birdstalker, Exile into Darkness, Inner-Chamber Guard.

My Pick:

For me the green Shinen is close to the Arcane giant growth in this pack. It's another good way for a white-green deck to win after it's locked things up and deployed its bigger creatures. Shinen can be amazing in most typical green decks, but this deck is lacking combat tricks, and Inner Calm, Outer Strength is a good one. I also like the fact that it can deal a lot of damage to the opponent as this deck also has Strength of Cedars and Spiraling Embers that can also do that so I can envisage some games being decided simply because two of those cards hit the opponent for an extra eight or ten damage in total.

Pack 3, Pick 5: Torii Watchward, Descendant of Soramaro, Shinen of Life's Roar, Death Denied, Deathknell Kami, Spiritual Visit, Inner Fire, Oboro Breezecaller, Promised Kannushi, Shifting Borders, Kami of the Tended Garden.

My Pick:

Another green Shinen that's annoying to have to pass. I'd really like one for this deck. However the four mana 4/4 with Soulshift 3 goes really well in this deck as it's a very nice sized body and could get back Waxmane Bakus and Ghostlit Raiders if I need it too as well. It's the better choice here and adds some good power to the deck.

Pack 3, Pick 6: Moonwing Moth, Freed from the Real, Cowed by Wisdom, Shinen of Fear's Chill, Curtain of Light, Into the Fray, Dreamcatcher, Dosan's Oldest Chant, Presence of the Wise, Kiri-Onna.

My Pick:

While I'm not crazy about the double-white casting cost in this deck, I think the Moth is the best pick here. I would've liked to have a Kiri-Onna in this deck if the mana could've supported it but I'd need a lot more than a single Cloudcrest Lake to consider it as a fourth colour splash. The Moth will definitely be played though and is a better pick here.

Pack 3, Pick 7: Minamo Scrollkeeper, Kitsune Dawnblade, Shinen of Flight's Wings, Death of a Thousand Stings, Curtain of Light, Ronin Cavekeeper, Oboro Breezecaller, Rending Vines, Shifting Borders.

My Pick:

Wow, a lot of good blue cards coming around, which is a little odd considering there were very few in pack one. There aren't any cards here I want to play and I take the powerful 3/3 flyer away from an opponent.

Pack 3, Pick 8: Descendant of Soramaro, Kitsune Dawnblade, Freed from the Real, Death of a Thousand Stings, Araba Mothrider, Path of Anger's Flame, Ideas Unbound, Ghost-Lit Warder.

My Pick:

The Mothrider is the one playable card here and is a fine little two-drop. It trades with most things at its casting cost and has evasion as well. It'll probably make the main deck and is a good pick because of that.

Pack 3, Pick 9: Cowed by Wisdom, Oppressive Will, Gnat Miser, Kitsune Bonesetter, Glitterfang, Cut the Earthly Bond, Ebony Owl Netsuke

My Pick:

Another late pick with little on offer. As this deck will have trouble dealing with creatures with abilities I take the Glitterfang just in case anyone was thinking about using it with a Spiritcraft trigger like an opposing Waxmane Baku, which this deck would have no answer to.

Late picks: Plow Through Reito, Matsu-Tribe Birdstalker, Spiritual Visit, Descendant of Soramaro, Curtain of Light, Kitsune Dawnblade.

Two solid additions to the deck in the late picks there. Both the Spiritual Visit and Plow Through Reito are good additions as there are plenty of Arcane cards for the Visit and both cards trigger the Waxmanes as well.

The Deck

The playable cards after the draft is complete look like this:



1CC: Mending Hands, Spiritual Visit

2CC: Orochi Sustainer, Kami of Ancient Law, Orochi Ranger, Split-Tail Miko, Araba Mothrider, Plow Through Reito

3CC: Yamabushi's Flame, Waxmane Baku x 2, Moonwing Moth, Roar of Jukai, Inner Calm, Outer Strength, Ghost-Lit Raider

4CC: Kitsune Healer, Mothrider Samurai x 2, Kami of the Tendered Garden, Torrent of Stone, Spiraling Embers

5CC: Strength of Cedars, Kami of Tattered Shoji, Soratami Cloud Chariot

6+CC: Moss Kami, Oyobi, Who Split the Heavens
Lands: Cloudcrest Lake, Tranquil Garden

That's a total of 26 cards, which means there are some cuts to be made.

The first to go for me is Mending Hands. There are a lot of spells in this deck already and this card isn't Arcane and it would really need to be if its minor effect was going to be included.

The next cut for me is Kami of Tattered Shoji. It's a better card in defensive decks that want the extra toughness on defence. This deck isn't really like that though and really wants its late game creature to hit the opponent hard. Having both Moss Kami and Oyobi as its late game creatures is good enough and there's no need for a 2/5 in this deck, even if it is a spirit.

I'd also ditch the Orochi Ranger here. It's basically the weakest creature in the deck. It's also not a spirit and there are plenty of other two-drops that I'd rather play over it.

The Kitsune Healer would get cut for similar reasons, it's just not as good as the other four-drops and isn't a necessary inclusion in this deck.

The next thing to decide on is the land count. With the four red cards in the deck I think it definitely wants four Mountains. Three is just bearable but I really want to draw one every game as the four red cards are all very powerful. A fourth Mountain dramatically increases the chances of doing that.

Utilising the Tranquil Garden too, and a land total of 18 means the deck can have seven Plains and six Forests and still be effectively playing eight white sources and seven green. White obviously gets the most lands as most cards are white and the Moth needs double white

Putting this all together gives the following deck:



Limited Information

Wrapping it up

Unfortunately I usually play back my games in *Magic Online* while writing the article out but this time my PC decided to crash as I was writing, wiping out the replay of the games I played. Instead of going through each game in depth I'll therefore just give some general conclusions about the deck and the draft and a more basic summary of how the games went.

Overall the draft went ok I think. When you draft with a set plan in mind you're very much vulnerable to the way the cards get opened. Not only were there no mana-fixers that could've been drafted there were also no other cards I'd really have wanted to splash for anyway. This goes to show how hard it is

to draft multi-coloured decks in this format when compared to *Invasion*, and even *Mirrodin* with its Sunburst mechanic.

The deck won its first two matches fairly well. Cloud Chariot won one game outright just by stalling the ground and sending the Kami of the Tended Garden to the air for a few turns. Strength of Cedars also won a game where a mana-flood was turned into a quick +12/+12 on a Mothrider to win a game that would otherwise have been lost a few turns later. Both of those cards performed superbly throughout the games.

The deck was a little light on creatures really, and needed some extra fat. Several of the 13 creatures that were played only had one power, which meant it was hard to win at times. The Waxmane Bakus weren't drawn very often, but when they were they really made the game a lot easier as there was never a shortage of triggers for them.

From the spells it was only really Roar of Jukai that massively under-performed. This deck just wasn't attacking and getting blocked very often. It got sideboarded out after every first game in favour of Heart of Light most often. With the Flyers, Waxmanes and Cloud Chariot in the deck I didn't find that the drawback of an opposing creature enchanted by a Heart of Light was particularly significant. It was excellent at taking care of a problematic creature though.

In the final round the deck was subject to the traditional routine we've all come to know and love. Game one I sat on three lands through-out the game, game two was won easily, and game three was lost to a huge flood while getting beaten down by Bile Urchins and an Ashen-Skin Zuberu equipped with a Shuko and enchanted with Blessing of Leeches! Unfortunately my deck just wouldn't cough up a way to deal with the 2/2 regenerator. I wouldn't recommend that as a route to victory for most of you though! This game in particular highlighted the general weakness of the creature base of the deck though. I made Oyobi but it got Eradicated on sight and there wasn't much else coming after that.

Not a wholly successful experiment anyway, but the draft was interesting and the deck actually worked very well. It demonstrates well the difficulties in trying to draft a multi-coloured deck in this format, and I think you can only really do that when you get the Sakura-Tribe Elder and Kodama's Reach passed to you in pack one, as opposed to coming in looking to force it. There are possibilities that back these two up in subsequent packs – Petalmane Baku, Elder Pine of Jukai, Seek the Horizon – but there's no guarantee you'll even see these cards. I like the flexibility you can gain from the three or four coloured base green decks but I think we'll have to wait until the next block to see if there's a better chance of forcing this archetype there.

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