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Fist of Suns

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Single-Card Strategies
Wednesday, July 13, 2005



So, it is Rainbow Week. Things being as they are, I won't be surprised if some of us overlap just a wee bit on the ways that we all want to write about it. I'll wager that most of the people who play **Magic** have seen *The Wizard of Oz*, and so I won't be surprised if other columnists' first instincts were to mention Dorothy and the Wicked Witch in some fashion or other. I know that is where I went.

Over the Rainbow, Part 1: Immersing yourself in color

Playing five-color decks can be a staple of casual play, but let's be honest – it's a tough job to make these babies sing in higher-level play. Oh, there are certainly some notable exceptions, but glance around at tournament-winning decklists in every format, and the vast majority run only a few colors.

Hitting all the colors of the rainbow is hard work. It's not surprising that decks that want to shine with rainbow colors are mostly exciting fantasies, and they work best when they stay firmly in their own fantasy world. But when they do come together, it can be a sight to see. This article lives in the world of fun and fancy, so I'll be looking at a card that lets you do basically *anything* once you embrace the powers of the rainbow: [Fist of Suns](#).



I know when I thought of Rainbow Week (and immediately of *The Wizard of Oz*), my first thoughts were immediately of [Fist of Suns](#). Here we have a card where anything is possible – anything, that is, once you're completely somewhere over the rainbow...

The trick, then, is how to get there.

Mana, mana, mana. It always comes down to mana, doesn't it? At this stage in the game, we've gotten to the point where there are literally *millions* of ways to fix your mana. Well, maybe not millions, but there certainly are quite a few. There are straightforward, risk-free, and reasonable cards like [Birds of Paradise](#), [Sakura-Tribe Elder](#), and [Kodama's Reach](#) (all conveniently in print!), and then there are slightly more risky cards like [Harrow](#) and the gamut of lands-with-drawbacks: [City of Brass](#), [Gemstone Mine](#), and [Undiscovered Paradise](#), to name a few. There are even more crazy ways. Take [Gaea's Balance](#), with its extra cost of sacrificing not one but *five* lands. I don't recommend *that* card if you live within a 10-mile radius of a counterspell.

We have to plan to be able to have all five colors, so a mix of methods is probably the best. What are our best options?

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NOVELS

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by Scott McGough

- **Land Fixers:** Fixers are one of the most stable ways to get multiple colors of mana. Whether it is Kodama's Reach, Harrow, or Krosan Tusker, these cards work very efficiently at getting the job done. Many of these cards don't really have any other purpose, but there are occasions where you'll get something else along the way. A Krosan Tusker can still be a big, fat beastie if it needs to and a part of the reason the Sakura-Tribe Elder is so gosh-darned good is that it can be used in the very early stages of the game as a reasonable speed bump.
- **Land:** Depending on the format, you'll have either a narrow or wide selection here. There are lands that are also land fixers. Cards such as Windswept Heath or Thawing Glaciers are really dedicated land-based mana fixers, but it's the land that actually *makes* multiple colors that I'm looking at here. City of Brass has been a staple for a long time, but it does have the added problem of constant pain. Other pain lands, from Sulfurous Springs to Yavimaya Coast, at least have the added benefit of no pain for colorless mana. If you go to older formats and actually are allowed to have real tried-and-true dual lands, you are in a sweet spot.
- **Stones:** From Fellwar Stone to various Moxen, there are plenty of artifacts out there that will help you make your mana. Mox Diamond might just be the crème de la crème, but even a Talisman can get you two colors of mana.
- **Augmentation:** Why not just make your land make more colors? If Enchantress decks taught us anything, it is that an Enchanted Land can be a mighty fine thing. Aside from Wild Growth, we have the fantastic Fertile Ground. Use Dawn's Reflection as a super-charged version, netting you some combination of three mana of multiple colors. Decks using augmented land might want to invest in a Sacred Ground, just in case.
- **The filter:** Change that color around any way you please! Of course Skyshroud Elf's job of filtering mana is a bit outclassed by a little snake, the Orochi Leafcaller. The most exciting filter to me, though, is Channel the Suns. With Channel the Suns, you can get that immediate rainbow action you're looking for, even if it is only temporary. Chromatic Sphere has been a great filter for some time, even seeing play as a filter in tournament-worthy decks like Affinity.
- **More search and draw:** I've always said that the simplest color fixer is the draw phase. Give yourself enough time, and you'll draw every color that your deck contains. Of course, you can always help it along with a bit of card drawing, whether it is Inspiration or Promise of Power. Library manipulation (always a favorite of mine) can take the place of extra card draws – Sensei's Divining Top and Impulse are great at finding something you're missing, even if it is as mundane as a color of mana.



Of course, on your journey to get to the five colors of the **Magic** rainbow, you'll have some stops along the way and you'll meet those who can help you on your journey. Fist of Suns is the goal to let you play anything (with the help of fixers to get you to at least one of each mana type), but you'll still need helper cards to keep safe as you ramp up.

Some of the “helper” cards are cards I've already mentioned. Library manipulation or a Sakura-Tribe Elder have a use in keeping you alive all by themselves, but there are others. One of the best things is simple creature elimination.

Running a primarily two-color base can be one easy way to access this elimination. Take a deck that is green-red, for example, and you can fit in a Flametongue Kavu or a Fire/Ice all that much easier. Green-black or green-white could give you Terror or Wrath of God, respectively. Even if you can make all the colors of mana, focusing on a couple can make it much easier just to cast a lot of your spells.

As you do build up your colors, cards such as the Bringers (my favorite is still Bringer of the Blue Dawn) begin to have a clear use. Etched Oracle is another great helper, as is Evasive Action. Collective Restraint can hold down a ton of potential attackers, and, well, I'm sure you get the idea. One final helper idea: it is pretty likely that you'll only be casting one big spell a turn once you are using Fist of Suns (each big spell will still cost WUBRG), so a card like Rule of Law qualifies as a helper as well!



Over the Rainbow, Part 2: A land of sugarplums, flying monkeys, and talking everything

Once you've gotten to the point where you're fully immersed in all five colors of the **Magic** rainbow, you can do anything. So what are we going to do now?

Having a multitude of options is great here. Tutors and card drawing are already a good idea when it comes to building up your mana, but now they can be reapplied to a new purpose: finding the best and most ridiculous stuff to do, now that every casting cost has been reduced to WUBRG. Thankfully, every one of these library manipulation cards only takes up one slot in your deck, even if it does play multiple roles!

These are just some of the cards that jump out at me as being great to get at a bargain. I'm sure you can come up with your own list of great cards that I've missed...

Phage the Untouchable: Hard to cast, for sure. At ♠♠♠♠♠ , that's a rough amount to try to find lying around. Since you can cast anything you want, I bet you can cast a spell that gets him through unblocked, too.



Kilnmouth Dragon: Dragons are generally pretty expensive, but with the ability to play them all for the same low cost, a Kilnmouth Dragon seems like a pretty sweet deal. Even with only two other Dragons in hand, you still get a 11/11 flier that can breath fire on people and their monsters. Even the “support” dragons (cards like Kokusho, for example) get a discount, even if it is only 1 mana. Nice!

Ancient Ooze: So you cast this guy with Fist of Suns out and you have a 0/0. But if you cast it after casting your other bargain-basement expensive guys, don't be surprised to have a 14/14 or more.

Legacy Weapon: You already have WUBRG lying around? Hmm....

Mythic Proportions: Should work pretty well, whether it is on your Birds of Paradise or that Kilnmouth Dragon.

Verdant Force: I don't know if this is still the best fattie ever (Akroma?), but it used to be. Whether it is or not, it's still a pretty great card to have on the table.

The Elder Dragon Legends: Of course Nicol Bolas is the king of all of these guys, but they are all still incredibly difficult to cast. With the way your deck works, paying their upkeep shouldn't be too hard at all!

The Myojin: Myojin of Nights Reach and Myojin of Seeing Winds take the cake, in my opinion, but the white one is pretty effective too. I'd be a bit hesitant before destroying all of the lands with Mr. Infinite Rage, though...

Scion of Darkness: This might be the card Ink-Eyes is trying to emulate. Regardless, it's pretty mean, and if you haven't gotten to the point where you can cast it, Cycling it is a really nice option.

Decree of Silence: Wow, do I love this card. Pushing through a Decree of Silence can take the wind out of nearly any deck's sails, and like Scion of Darkness, you can Cycle it. Cycling it may not be as easy, but it does come with a little bonus attached...

Decree of Pain: The last Cycling card, really. As I mentioned earlier, you want cards that can be useful in the path up to getting an active Fist of Suns going. Here, Decree of Pain can be Cycled to wipe away your attackers, and once you get to cast it, you can put a huge effect on the table along with card drawing all in one card. Nice.

Reiver Demon: ♠♠♠♠♠ . Reiver Demon is hard to cast, even for a black deck. Fisting it out, though, you still get the benefit of its potent effect, and you get to keep that Scion and the Hypnox in play. (What aren't they dead already with that kind of table presence?)



Suncrusher: Suncrusher works best when it gets a bit out of Sunburst. Fist of Suns doesn't get in the way of that at all, it just makes Suncrusher about half the cost.



Time Stretch: Perhaps the most consistent “I win” card. As long as your deck does much of anything, it always seems like Time Stretch ought to just make everyone pick up their cards.

Reya Dawnbringer: Another “I-win” card. If the game has gone on any length of time, I bet you have a graveyard of goodies. Especially good the turn after your opponent wiped out all your old undercosted goodies.

Darksteel Colossus: I like 11/11 Indestructible trampers for only 5 mana. How about you?

Of course, you might find other cards that more suite *your* style.

While we're here, still Over the Rainbow, let's see what we can mix together for a deck!

Friendly Fists		
60 cards		
2 <u>Swamp</u>	4 <u>Birds of Paradise</u>	4 <u>Eladamri's Call</u>
2 <u>Island</u>	4 <u>Sakura-Tribe Elder</u>	4 <u>Fist of Suns</u>
2 <u>Plains</u>	2 <u>Yavimaya Elder</u>	2 <u>Time Stretch</u>
2 <u>Mountain</u>	2 <u>Bringer of the Blue Dawn</u>	
2 <u>Forest</u>	1 <u>Reya Dawnbringer</u>	10 other spells
2 <u>Yavimaya Coast</u>	2 <u>Darksteel Colossus</u>	
4 <u>Karplusan Forest</u>	1 <u>Bringer of the Black Dawn</u>	
4 <u>Brushland</u>	3 <u>Flametongue Kavu</u>	
2 <u>Mirrodin's Core</u>	2 <u>Phantom Nishoba</u>	
2 <u>City of Brass</u>	4 <u>Eternal Witness</u>	
24 land	1 <u>Akroma, Angel of Wrath</u>	
	26 creatures	

This deck is basically all critters and the Fist. Eladamri's Call is just a creature waiting to be found and cast, and even if Time Stretch isn't a creature at all, I do enjoy casting it, so in it goes.

Essentially, the deck uses creatures to build its mana, creatures to stay alive and recover from losses (Flametongue, Eternal Witness, Sakura), and creatures to win in the end. Eladamri's Call is really good here, getting either the build up, the answer, or the threat. Some of the big finishers work fine as one-ofs, but the few two-ofs are there just to increase the chances of simply drawing them. The Blue Bringer adds extra card drawing to get out a Fist for your other creatures. Double Nishoba increases your chance of getting life gain going, and double Colossus is nice so that you can tutor up a second Colossus and really put the lights out. I'm not generally a person that enjoys such a creature-heavy deck, but I think it works nicely here.

Over the Rainbow, Part 3: The end of the movie

And so, here we are back in the real world. At some point when I was writing this article, I thought of some of the decks that I've seen that were both incredibly successful and five colors. The first really exciting and successful five-color deck I can remember watching was piloted by Leonard Richardson out of Kentucky. He was a kind of amazing early tournament player, traveling from here to there running the decks of friends he'd made along the way at various cash tournaments that cropped up more commonly back then. He would run the decks of Brian Schneider quite often, and later on he'd start running decks I gave him, but on that first day, I remember him playing a deck co-designed by Senor Stompy creator Bill Macey. The deck was 5cR, or Five-color Red.

Of course, the most famous early Constructed rainbow deck will probably always be the first Five-color Green, but to me there will always be something awesome about watching little red creatures attack and get help from the other four colors of **Magic** to boot. My own dabbling with all of the colors of **Magic** was the exact opposite style of deck. It came out during *Invasion* (surprise, surprise), where I put

together Sunny D, my white-based Domain deck that Brian Davis piloted to a Top 8 way back at [Grand Prix Minneapolis 2001](#). It's a deck that I'm pretty proud of; English deck designer Ben Ronaldson would later admit grudgingly that it did a fine job of smashing on normal domain.

Brian Davis Grand Prix-Minneapolis 2001 Top 8		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
8 Forest	4 Allied Strategies	3 Benalish Emissary
6 Island	4 Chromatic Sphere	3 Dodecapod
1 Mountain	3 Collective Restraint	3 Gainsay
4 Plains	4 Evasive Action	2 Lobotomy
1 Swamp	2 Global Ruin	1 Overgrown Estate
20 land	4 Harrow	1 Pernicious Deed
1 Rakavolver	3 Lay of the Land	1 Restock
1 Sabertooth Nishoba	1 Legacy Weapon	1 Swamp
1 Spiritmonger	1 Lobotomy	15 sideboard cards
4 Sunscape Familiar	1 Pernicious Deed	
7 creatures	1 Restock	
	1 Spite/Malice	
	4 Worldly Counsel	
	33 other spells	

All of this talk of tournaments ... I've always been much more of a writer who feels at home in the tournament world. Over the past year and a half, I've had a lot of fun writing this column, but it definitely has been a struggle for me. I know (as I'm sure that some of you do) that a lot of the pleasure that I get out of the game of **Magic** is a lot more similar to the way that a Michael Flores might enjoy **Magic** rather than a Gottlieb or an Alongi.

I know that every week, there are a lot of things that I hit on again and again, often because I look at everything from a tournament perspective. I hit on mana and ways to search your library and ways to find redundancy, and any other number of things that come out of this tournament background.

This column has been a fun one, and there are many things I will miss, but in all honesty it hasn't been a good match for me. In one month, it will be roughly a year and a half that I've been writing it, but like all things do, it will come to an end. Scott has been teasing a new column for several months now, and it will be replacing Single Card Strategies in just over a month. This isn't goodbye yet. But it will be soon. I'm still looking for a fun way to send things off. If you have a great idea, I'd be more than happy to try it out. Send me an e-mail with "Column Idea" in the topic and it will be all the more likely to be seen in these last few weeks.

Have a great rest of the month, and let's end things with a bang.



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