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# Tribal Wars: Natural Selection

Bennie Smith  
Into the Aether  
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## Greater Update

I have to say it's been fun playtesting the final four **Greater Good** decks and it's been extremely tough choosing between them. I'm leaning in one particular direction at this point, but I still want to get in a couple more games with each of the decks before I make the final decision. So, no winner yet this week, but things might fall into place by this time next week!

## R&D Members to start drafting on *Magic Online*!

Some interesting news that some of you may have already noticed. For those that haven't, recently Wizards has been trying out an experimental "Zero-K" draft initiative. Members of Magic R&D are being given the power to start 8-person draft tables in the 8-player draft room. These drafts work just like the regular draft queues with a couple of exceptions:



Don't squint too hard at this picture trying to figure out spoilers; it was taken in January of 2002. One of these men doesn't even work here anymore!

1. They are unsanctioned. Specifically, the K-value which determines how much impact matches have on your rating will be set to 0.
2. There will be one or more Wizards R&D employees in the draft.
3. They are first-come, first-served tables of 8 instead of being filled via queues.

Other than that they still require the same entry fee (2 Event Tickets plus product) and they still give out the same prizes (8-4 or 4-3-2-2 as labeled in the description). These events are "opt-in" only! You will never be forced to play against Wizards employees if you stick to the normal queues, but if you want to try your hand against the guys who help make the game and you see one of these special tables appear in the room, feel free to jump in!

## Tribal Wars

Tribal Wars is a pretty cool format that popped up in one **Magic** Invitational and also got a huge boost in *Onslaught* block, where "creature type matters." The format has been covered here and there on **magicthegathering.com**, and here's a few links for those of you

who haven't dabbled in the format yet.

- [Family Feuds](#) by Mark Gottlieb
- [Into The Aether: Men, Vedalken, and RachelR](#) by JMS (with lots of other links)
- [Into The Aether Invokes the Ultimus Principle](#) by JMS
- [Wizards Tribal Wars Decks](#) by Aaron Forsythe

The basic rules are pretty simple: A third of the cards in your deck must share a creature type, so in a 60 card deck, that's 20 creatures that share a tribe. For those of you that think 20 creatures in your deck is a bit excessive, get over yourselves: tribal is about creatures!

A few cards are a bit ridiculous in this format and have been banned: **Unnatural Selection**, **Engineered Plague**, **Tsabo's Decree**, **Circle of Solace**, **Endemic Plague**, **Peer Pressure**, and **Skullclamp**.

Also, sideboards aren't allowed in Tribal Wars. You rely on your tribe to see you through, no tricky switcheroo stuff between games.

I've been interested in dabbling in Tribal Wars for a while now, but recently I got an email that piqued my interest:

*Hey Bennie, big fan of what you are doing with your column, especially love the vanguard info and even more so your coverage of some of the player run events, which is why I am e-mailing you. If you are a watcher of the MTGO message boards you may have seen the large thread that is growing for the tribal wars campaign, which has now been dubbed "Natural Selection". It looks like it*



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**Magic Online** announcements

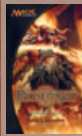
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is going to be a fair size, long running player organized event. Right now Ith is the one you should seek out if you want more info as he is the one in charge. Just thought with your keen interest in player run events you may want to stick your head in and see what we are doing.

Hope this e-mail finds you well.

Alan Linneweber (staynz79au in the Æther)

Since I've definitely made it a point to promote and support player-run events on **Magic Online**, this seemed to be the perfect time to give Tribal a try!

[Here's the link to the Natural Selection message board thread](#), with the complete official rules found on page 7 (post #205). I won't repost the complete rules here, but here's the gist of the format:

Pick a tribe other than elves, goblins, and zombies since they are banned. Elves, goblins and zombie fans are bummed but you've got to acknowledge that they would certainly otherwise be dominating.

Pick a color for your kingdom. Ith is grouping tribes by dominant color,

2. with 5-color being a "sixth" color and artifacts/colorless being a potential seventh if somebody chooses to try it.
3. Send that information along with your MTGO screen name to naturalselectionmtgo at gmail dot com.
4. When a kingdom opening comes, or enough people are ready to be gathered into a new kingdom, Ith will post updates to the Kingdoms and get you into rotation for matches.

You will start with four "territories" that will serve as ante to be won or lost depending on how your matches go. Ith will randomly pair up players for a weekly match, leaving arrangements for dueling to the combatants, with both reporting the results afterwards.

With my schedule, making regularly scheduled weekly events can be tough or impossible (which is why I was sad to not be able to try joining in Survivor Magic IV), but Ith set this up to be extremely flexible and fun. I'm in!

The most important question now is... what tribe? I thought long and hard about it; I definitely wanted to pick a tribe far off the beaten path. Cats and Snakes and Clerics are all fine tribes, powerful and fun, but picking one of these tribes would bring some baggage. First, how much fun would it be reading about these more common tribes more than once? I'd like to touch base and share with all you my adventures in Natural Selection and hopefully entertain you with my trials and tribulations. Second, there are likely a lot of people who know more about these particular tribes, how to build the decks and how to play them, than I do. So if pick an obscure tribe that hardly anyone has played before, I both make it interesting to write about and instantly become "the expert" if only by default!

## Bringing It!

That's why I decided on the Bringer Tribe. Fun, obscure, and potentially powerful, these *Fifth Dawn* critters bring some interesting deck construction challenges.

Once you decide on the Bringers, your choices are pretty well locked in; with only five Bringers, you've got to play four copies of all of them just to meet your minimum requirements of 20 tribal members. After that, you've got some serious mana concerns; how can you consistently get all five colors out there to actually play these guys via their alternative mana costs since for five mana they're a bargain, but for nine? Ouch!

With *Champions of Kamigawa*, green-based multicolor decks have become quite viable on the backs of *Sakura-Tribe Elder*, *Kodama's Reach* and the venerable *Birds of Paradise*. That seemed to be the logical place to start, but I didn't necessarily want to go that way if I could help it. Could there be a different way? I ended up trying this out:



Natural Selection (Tribal Wars – Bringers) (v1.0)		
60 cards		
1 Keldon Necropolis	4 Coretapper	4 Chromatic Sphere
1 Miren, the Moaning Well	4 Bringer of the Black Dawn	1 Engineered Explosives
1 Wooded Foothills	4 Bringer of the Blue Dawn	4 Pentad Prism
1 Windswept Heath	4 Bringer of the Red Dawn	3 Umezawa's Jitte
1 Polluted Delta	4 Bringer of the White Dawn	1 Mindslaver
1 Flooded Strand	4 Bringer of the Green Dawn	
1 Bloodstained Mire		13 other spells

1 Swamp	24 creatures
1 Forest	
1 Mountain	
1 Island	
1 Plains	
3 Glimmervoid	
4 Tendo Ice Bridge	
4 Mirrodin's Core	
<hr/>	
23 land	

Probably one of the strongest end-game setups in **Magic** since *Fifth Dawn* has been recurring **Mindslaver** with **Bringer of the White Dawn**. While that isn't exactly a fun way to win, it's too strong to ignore. The idea here though was to try and make sure that the White Bringer had more to do than just try and set up the lock. **Engineered Explosives** and **Pentad Prism** are powerful in a multicolored deck, but they don't exactly play well with the White Bringer. Enter **Coretapper**, who can both charge up those artifacts and also feed **Umezawa's Jitte**. I've been itching for **Coretapper** to be really good somewhere; this seemed to be a good spot for him.

Unfortunately, after playing a half-dozen games with this build, one thing quickly became clear: if I did not draw both a **Pentad Prism** and **Coretapper**, I'd typically be able to cast only one Bringer early enough to matter. While the Bringers are potent creatures, especially early on, they don't "just win" on their own. Sadly, I realized I probably needed to go back to base green mana-fixing, so that once I could cast the first Bringer, I should be able to keep casting Bringers. After a few tweaks here's what I ended up with:



<b>Natural Selection (Tribal Wars – Bringers) (v2.2)</b>			txt
60 cards			
1 Miren, the Moaning Well	1 Molder Slug	1 Mindslaver	
8 Forest	4 Bringer of the Black Dawn	1 Exile into Darkness	
1 Island	4 Bringer of the Blue Dawn	3 Kodama's Reach	
1 Mountain	4 Bringer of the Green Dawn	3 Umezawa's Jitte	
1 Plains	4 Bringer of the Red Dawn		
1 Swamp	4 Bringer of the White Dawn	8 other spells	
3 City of Brass	1 Razormane Masticore		
2 Polluted Delta	4 Sakura-Tribe Elder		
2 Windswept Heath	4 Birds of Paradise		
2 Wooded Foothills			
<hr/>			
22 land	30 creatures		

After the Bringers, the mana fixers, and the **Mindslaver**, you don't have too many other slots for spice and utility. **Umezawa's Jitte**, as cheesy as it is, provides too much utility in a creature-dominated format not to run it. I know others will be thinking the same thing, which is why I decided to add a **Molder Slug** to chew up opposing equipment. **Exile into Darkness** is a recent addition, having done so well in *Kamigawa* block decks that I imagine it could be pretty good here.



My first opponent was epistrophy, who was with the Kavus tribe. With Sparkcasters, Kavus Titans and Flametongue Kavus, my burly Bringers didn't feel so large and he had me on the ropes from almost the beginning. With two Green Bringers out there, I thought I'd be able to stabilize but then he cast Burning Wish.

*IntoTheAether: I thought sideboards weren't allowed in Tribal Wars?*

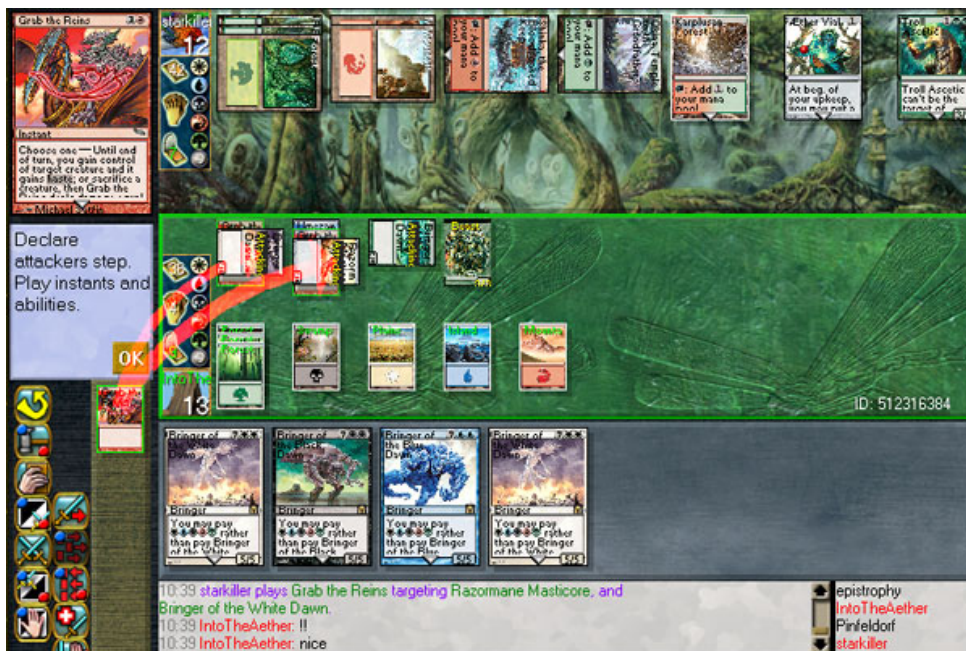
*epistrophy: They're not, but you can Wish from your collection.*

*IntoTheAether: !!!*

Naturally, this was bad news for me as he wished for a Panic Attack and while my poor Bringers and their beast friend were freaking out, the Kavus came running by to smack my life total into negatives.

Wishes just seem broken in this format! lth addresses it in one of his posts, pointing out that the matches are best two of three games timed to a 60 minute match, which means "wishes are nearly useless." Since I'm already clock-challenged as it is, Wishes are probably not a good option for me especially since the collection in a Wizards account like the one I use is... well, rather large.

I play another game against starkiller, who's thrown his lot in with Shaman. Vulshok Shaman mow down my early mana birds but I manage to cobble together all five lands and start dropping the Bringers. An early Black Bringer fetches a Razormane Masticore before he dies, which seems like the perfect complement to the White and Blue Bringers in my hand.



starkiller scares me with **Grab the Reins**, killing both the White Bringer and my **Masticore**, but by that time I've drawn two more White Bringers and soon get the **Masticore** back online and doing what he does so well.

A few more games and I feel like the deck has a decent chance to win against many decks. I'm assigned to the Prismatic Citadel kingdom (5-Colors), and my Week 1 match-up is against DrWorm from the Unholy Bayou. I believe he's playing black spirits, so we'll see how that goes! My co-Kingdom player TheKEG is with dragons, playing against Silver One with samurai from the Burning Mountainside (red) Kingdom, so wish him luck in his match too. With only two members of Prismatic Citadel, we need all the wins we can rack up!

## Survivor Magic IV Recap: Week 5 (Round 6)

The recap came in too late to make it under deadline, but you can read full coverage [at this site](#).

## Tips and Tricks: What is a fraudulent or 'Phishing' email?

With some phishing scams on the rise recently, here are some important words of advice from Wizards of the Coast on the topic and how it relates to **Magic Online**.

Fraudulent emails are commonly referred to as 'phishing' emails. Phishing emails can take several forms, the most common being the 'spoof' email which pretends to be from a well-known company or support group (such as Wizards of the Coast, Hasbro, or **Magic Online Store**) in an attempt to get personal information from you. People who send spoof emails hope to use your information - such as account passwords, answers to security question or credit card information - to commit account theft.

**THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT RULE TO REMEMBER IS THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF WIZARDS OF THE COAST WILL NEVER REQUEST YOUR MTGO PASSWORD UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!**

This rule includes emails, phone contacts, web postings, forums, in-game chat or **any** means of communication we may use. We simply do not need this piece of data; our systems are set up so we can locate and access any relevant information with just your login name only.

Scammers are clever and will seek more elaborate methods to convince you to give up vital information. Spoof emails can often lead victims to spoof websites which, on cursory inspection, look almost exactly like the real websites of the companies they are spoofing. However, they usually always contain content that reveals they are fake. The most important thing is to protect yourself from phishing emails by being able to spot this misleading content.

## Know a phishing scam when you see it

Frequently, a spoof MTGO email tries to distract you on the 'seemingly' genuine Customer Service questions enough so that you don't notice the casual way they ask for all your account details and will often look or sound like this:

Get a free new Avatar for Magic Online by answering a few questions, and we will send a new Avatar to your account. It will be a new Avatar that will use the Vanguard option and should bring some balance to the game. We look forward to the next line of Vanguard events and we hope to see you there. Be sure to include all information so that your email can be processed and you can receive your Avatar within 3-4 days. Simply "reply" to this email and answer each question by putting a "Y" for Yes or a "N" for No after each question. If all information is not included it may delay your Avatar.

1. Do you think you will play in Vanguard events in the future?
2. Have you had any trouble with our online Moderators(adepts)?
3. Have you had any trouble buying from the Magic Online store?
4. Would you play in vanguard events if they were free?

Be sure to include your contact information below.

Name:  
Phone(optional):  
User Name:  
Password:  
Comments(optional):

Thank you for your input. Your Avatar should be sent 3-4 days after this email has been processed.

Here's a different example that encourages players into trying to gain free cards via an exploit in the game. The reality is they are scamming any 'would be' scammers. Poetic justice perhaps, but definitely illegal behavior.

First off let me say I am not responsible for anything you do with this information. You do this at your own risk and if you are caught your account WILL be banned from Magic: The Gathering Online. Secondly let me say, in the 6 months I have been doing this I have never been caught. This is the safest and easiest way to get Magic log-in names and passwords.

First off you might want to create a secondary Magic account just to be on the safe side as I have done. Then send an email to: [MagicTGSupport@aol.com](mailto:MagicTGSupport@aol.com). This is a bot that Wizards of the Coast has set up for people who have forgotten their passwords or had cards "poof" in-game.

From here there are two things you can do:

One ask them for an card you have always wanted by saying you had it in your collection when you logged out but now it is gone. You will need to include your log-in name and your password. Don't forget to capitalize the letters that need to be in your name and password.

The best time to do this is when the game actually come down for a patch. Just say you were booted when it went down. Now as this is 90% a bot doing the replies most times you won't even have to deal with a customer service rep. The card will just be put in your collection automatically. Of course it goes to say DON'T ask for a card that isn't in the game. Like Black Lotus or a set of Moxes. But just about any other cards will be given to you no questions asked.

Secondly if you want to hack someone else's account just have the subject of your email be password recovery then on the first line of the email put your log-in name followed on the second line with your password. This will confuse the bot and will make him send out a random log-in name and password.

There you have it the safest hack available. Use it at your own risk. DON'T GET STUPID, a little common sense and you will soon have every card there is.

## 10 ways to recognize spoof/phishing scams

1. Generic greetings. Many spoof emails begin with a general greeting, such as: "Dear **Magic Online** user." If you do not see your first and last name, be suspicious and do not click on any links or button.
2. A fake sender's address. A spoof email may include a forged email address in the "From" field. This field is easily altered.
3. A false sense of urgency. Many spoof emails try to deceive you with the threat that your account is in jeopardy if you don't update it ASAP. They may also state that there has been suspicious activity has recently occurred on your account, or claim Wizards of the Coast is updating its accounts and needs information fast.
4. Fake links. Always check where a link is going before you click. Move your mouse over it and look at the URL in your browser or email status bar. A fraudulent link is dangerous. If you click on one, it could:
  - a. Direct you to a spoof website that tries to collect your personal data.
  - b. Install spyware/crimeware on your system. Spyware is an application that can enable a hacker to monitor your actions and steal any passwords or credit card numbers you type online.
  - c. Cause you to download a virus that could disable your computer.
5. Emails that appear to be websites. Some emails will look like a website in order to get you to enter personal information. **Wizards of the Coast will never ask for personal information in an email.**
6. Deceptive URLs. Only enter your **Magic Online** password on **Magic Online** pages. These begin with <https://magiconlinestore.wizards.com> .
  - a. If you see an @ sign in the middle of a URL, there's a good chance this is a spoof. Legitimate companies use a domain name (e.g. <https://www.company.com>).
  - b. Even if a URL contains the word "wizards" or "wizards.com," it may not be a Wizards site.
  - c. Always log in to **Magic Online** store by opening a new web browser and typing in the following: <https://magiconlinestore.wizards.com/> or clicking the card shop icon in the **Magic Online** client
  - d. Never log in to the **Magic Online** Store from a link in an email. The safest way to access the store is via the links inside the client.
7. Misspellings and bad grammar. Spoof emails often contain misspellings, incorrect grammar, missing words, and gaps in logic. Mistakes also help fraudsters avoid spam filters.
8. Unsafe sites. The term "https" should always precede any website address where you enter personal information. The "s" stands for secure. If you don't see "https," you're not in a secure web session, and you should not enter data.
9. Pop-up boxes. Wizards will never use a pop-up box in an email as pop-ups are not secure.
10. Attachments. Like fake links, attachments are frequently used in spoof emails and are dangerous. Never click on an attachment. It could cause you to download spyware or a virus. Wizards will never email you an attachment or a software update to install on your computer.

If you receive a spoof email, forward the entire email - including the header information - to us at: [spoof@wizards.com](mailto:spoof@wizards.com), then delete it from your mailbox.

## Information we will never ask you in an email, chat or phone call

To help you better identify fake emails, we follow strict rules. We will never ask for the following personal information in emails, via chat or over the phone

- MTGO account passwords (you can never overstate this one)
- Bank account numbers
- Social Security numbers
- Full credit card numbers
- Credit card security codes (i.e. CVV, CID, etc.)
- Card PIN numbers (e.g. debit card 4 digit codes)

## Ways to fight spoof

1. Keep your security software current. Update your firewalls and security patches frequently. Consider using software from companies like McAfee and Symantec.
2. Monitor your account. Check your account periodically to see if there is any suspicious activity.
3. Change your password often. And, if you think your security may have been breached, create a new password immediately.
4. Use a unique password. Your **Magic Online** password should be one-of-a-kind, and not used on any of your other accounts. A good password contains letters and numbers. This makes it more difficult for people to guess it. Never give your password out to anyone.
5. Take action. If your information is compromised, contact customer service immediately.
6. Report it to Wizards of the Coast. Forward the entire email - including the header information - or the site's URL to [spooof@wizards.com](mailto:spooof@wizards.com). We investigate every spoof reported.
7. If the email originated from hotmail or yahoo, report the email to the respective services website.

## Additional resources

If you want more information regarding phishing or other fraud scams try checking out the following websites:

- **The Anti-Phishing Workgroup** at: [www.antiphishing.org](http://www.antiphishing.org)
- **Federal Trade Commission** at: [www.consumer.gov/idtheft/](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/)
- **FBI** at: [www.fbi.gov/homepage.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/homepage.htm)
- **FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3)** at: [www.ic3.gov/](http://www.ic3.gov/)

Scammers often try to mine for other personal details with the aim of committing financial theft or full identity theft. If you think you are a victim of this type of crime please report it to your local law enforcement office immediately.

*Bennie Smith has been playing **Magic** since Arabian Nights, and writing about it nearly as long. Several of his early musings appeared on the Magic Dojo, and from there he became a featured writer for Star City Games and a Contributing Editor for Scrye Magazine before he started writing for [magicthegathering.com](http://magicthegathering.com). While a casual gamer at heart, Bennie also thoroughly enjoys the competitive side of **Magic** and won the Virginia State Championship in 1999.*



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