

# Making The Most Of Your Bomb

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With *Ravnica* only just arriving on *Magic Online* and the *Ravnica* beta being lacking in triple *Ravnica* drafts over the last few weeks, my testing of that format has halted somewhat recently. While I've been able to get in an occasional real-life draft, the vast majority of my play normally takes place online. With *Ravnica* draft queues up and running this week I'll soon start having some draft-picks and draft walk-throughs to discuss, but for today I'm going to tackle that other limited format: sealed deck.



With *Ravnica* being released online there'll be a lot of sealed deck play happening this week as both the pre-release events and pre-release leagues will use this format. There's a lot to think about when constructing your *Ravnica* sealed deck and as I've only had one prior *Ravnica* sealed deck article I'm sure we could all use the practice.

So with that in mind I'll kick straight off with the card pool I opened for this week's column.

## The Cardpool

It's one *Ravnica* tournament pack and two *Ravnica* boosters used here, as that'll be the standard used in pre-release tournaments and leagues.

Before getting to the cards I want to talk a little about the best way to actually sort the cards you open. This might sound silly but you really need to think about this. The guild structure of *Ravnica* makes sealed deck very different from what we'd normally expect.

You still need to separate out the five colours, but you don't want to set them out with allied colours next to each other as you might have in *Invasion* for example. This time you want to arrange them with the dual-guild colours in the middle. The best order is:

**Blue - Black - Green - White - Red**

This allows you to put all of the guild and hybrid cards between their appropriate colours so you basically end up with nine piles of cards:

**Blue - Black - Green - White - Red**  
**Dimir - Golgari - Selesnya - Boros**

Sometimes you'll have an odd generic artifact like Grifter's Blade or Terrarion but you can just make a note of those and put them to one side.

A lot of times you'll have cards that sit in one colour but are actually guild specific cards. For example I might play Votary of the Conclave in a Selesnya deck, but certainly not in a Boros deck. Boros Fury-Shield is another card that fits in that Guild but that you probably wouldn't play in Selesnya. It's up to you where you put these as you can put them with the appropriate guild cards if you want. I might do that for some cards but in general I don't. There are too many cards like Mortipede or Transluminant that might actually make the cut even when you aren't able to activate their abilities simply because you need the filler.

With all of that in mind, the cards opened for this exercise amount to:

<b>Blue:</b>	<b>Black:</b>	<b>Green:</b>	<b>White:</b>	<b>Red:</b>
Terraformer	Thoughtpicker	Fists of Ironwood	Caregiver x 2	Viashino Slasher
Vedalken Entrancer	Witch	Trophy Hunter	Votary of the	Sabertooth Alley
Vedalken Dismissal	Roofstalker Wight	Stone-Seeder	Conclave	Cat
x 3	Dark Confidant	Hierophant	Courier Hawk x 2	Goblin Spelunkers
Dizzy Spell	Golgari Thug	Scatter the Seeds x	Gate Hound	Molten Sentry
Muddle the Mixture	Sadistic Augermage 2		Wojek Apothecary	Barbarian Riftcutter
Peel from Reality	Necroplasm	Gather Courage	Conclave Phalanx	Surge of Zeal
Remand	Dimir House Guard	Farseek	Divebomber Griffin	Rain of Embers
Compulsive	Sewerdreg	Rolling Spoil	Wojek Siren x 2	Dogpile
Research x 2	Clinging Darkness	Overwhelm	Suppression Field	
Stasis Cell	Shred Memory x 2		Leave No Trace	
	Last Gasp		Boros Fury-Shield	
	Strands of Undeath		Conclave's Blessing	
			Festival of the	
			Guildpact	
<b>Dimir:</b>	<b>Golgari:</b>	<b>Selesnya:</b>	<b>Boros:</b>	
Dimir Guildmage	Shambling Shell	Selesnya Signet	Thundersong Trumpeter	
Perplex	Golgari Rotworm	Seeds of Strength	x 2	
Consult the Necrosages	Plague Boiler	Glare of Subdual	Boros Swiftblade	
Clutch of the Undercity	Gaze of the Gorgon	Pollenbright Wings	Rally the Righteous	
Dimir Aqueduct				

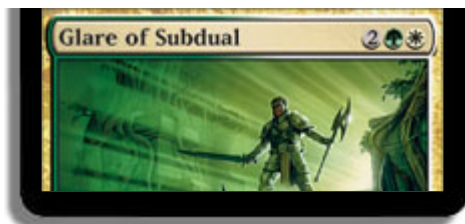


I've also saved the cardpool in **Magic Online** format so you can download the .DEC file, open it up in **Magic Online** and try building it yourself if you so desire.

## The Hits

The first thing I look for when first examining a pool like this are any 'bombs' (the very best cards) that might be included. This deck has actually fared well in this area, as there's both *Glare of Subdual* and *Plague Boiler*.





Necroplasm can be nasty too if you drop it at an opportune moment. For those who are unaware, Dark Confidant is not normally playable in sealed deck. Drawing an extra card every turn is nice but when you flip up a Golgari Rotwurm followed by a Scatter the Seeds you probably won't be living to make use of those cards.

There are a few uncommons here that I really like in Sealed too. Pollenbright Wings and Overwhelm are both capable of outright winning games all by themselves and are both great cards in the slower sealed deck format.

Dimir Guildmage is another card that's good anytime, but that will win games if it's unanswered in the mid-to-late game. Drawing two cards every turn while ensuring your opponent can't hold on to any tricks is a sure-fire way to swing a game in your favour.

Already looking at those cards we can definitely see that both black and green are well represented. These are two of the most common colours used in sealed deck play but there's no doubt they contain a lot of powerful cards already here.

## Reviewing the cardpool

Once you've noted any particularly powerful cards you then want to go through the rest. It's best to go through the card pool one colour at a time, paying special attention to the guild cards along the way. You should be reviewing each colour as a whole, looking for its strengths and weaknesses, any particularly great cards you have, and how deep each colour is.

### Blue

Blue is actually quite deep with only Muddle the Mixture being truly unplayable. Three Dismissers makes for a very heavy top end of the mana curve but they're all still playable. We're missing flyers here unfortunately but there is a sole Entrancer if a Dimir milling deck was something we wanted to go for. There's a lot of playable filler here but nothing to get excited about.

### Black

This colour is not as deep but it does have more power. The aforementioned Necroplasm is a fine card. I've played with that a few times and being able to instantly wipe out all Saprolings at the end of the turn Necroplasm is played is often relevant enough by itself. On two past occasions I've managed to drop a Strands of Undeath on the Necroplasm, making myself able to regenerate it from its own effect once it gets three counters. At that point it simply grows and grows over future turns and you soon have a creature that's very difficult for an opponent to manage. With a Strands in this cardpool it's a nice combo to look out for.

There are two solid removal spells here as well, which is definitely another plus. The creature base is weak but that's often the case with black. Sewerdreg is frequently unblockable in sealed play due to opposing swamps, but other weaker creatures like Roofstalker Wight and Sadistic Augermage may well have to be relied on to fill out the creature count.

The Dimir cards are decent enough with the Guildmage being the most powerful by itself. However, we really need to pay attention to the Transmute ability of this guild in this pool. We have a Plague

Boiler and a Glare of Subdual in this pool. We also have a Perplex which can tutor for the Plagueboiler, and both Clutch of the Undercity and Dimir House Guard which can Transmute into the Glare. All of these cards need extra attention paid to them during the deck building process. If the mana can support it we definitely want to be playing the equivalent of three Glares of Subdual if possible. The Dimir Aqueduct may help us do that.

## Green

There's not a lot in green but what is here is fine. There are three cards that give us some Saprolings and they will be very welcome if we're able to get the Glare into play. It's a shame there are no Siege Wurms to Convoke out but the Saprolings could also help us make the most of the Overwhelm. Farseek and Gather Courage are both welcome too.

The Golgari cards add a lot here. Shambling Shell and Golgari Rotwurm are both excellent additions to the creature base of any Golgari deck. Plague Boiler is obviously far superior when you can add or remove counters at will, and Gaze of the Gorgon is a great combat trick. All four of those cards are very good reasons to look at a heavy Golgari theme.

## White

White has a lot of depth with easily the highest number of cards. Why did they all have to be so bad though?! There's really very little here to write home about. There are two solid flyers, and a few other playable creatures too but nothing that's crying out to be included. It's a shame to have such a deep colour with so few good cards in it, but there's no point in dwelling on that fact. The Courier Hawks may well be playable to help get those Scatter the Seeds out a turn earlier, and they can still attack and tap an opposing creature if the Glare of Subdual is in play. While they aren't great they'd probably get played in that deck.

The Selesnya cards add a lot. Glare of Subdual is one of the most powerful limited cards in the set and I definitely plan on including it if at all possible. The other two Selesnya cards are both great too, and the Signet may well come in handy to fix the mana of what is sure to be at least a three colour deck.

## Red

The best two commons (Galvanic Arc and Viashino Fangtail) are missing and there's basically nothing that replaces them. The removal is weak and the creatures are weak. There's no reason here to want to include red in the deck.

The Boros cards add some more playable creatures but they aren't worth including red for.

## Choosing the colours

It seems quite apparent from the initial overview that black and green are both going to make up a major part of the deck. They have a lot of solid cards, a bomb or two, and our best removal spells as well.



Red is obviously immediately out and with the best cards being the cheap Boros creatures, it isn't even a colour I'd want to consider splashing as those cards all want to be cast early in the game.

White has about two cards that I really like the look of – Divebomber Griffin and Conclave Equenaut – but that isn't a lot to base a deck around. There are the three excellent Selenya cards here, but to make white one of the base colours of the deck would require playing too many random one-power monsters for my liking. The Wojek Sirens aren't terrible but you generally want your spells to do more and I'd rather have a Gather Courage in most situations.

The cards I'd immediately look to include would be:

- 1CC:** Gather Courage
- 2CC:** Fists of Ironwood, Last Gasp, Clinging Darkness, Farseek
- 3CC:** Necroplasm, Shambling Shell, Trophy Hunter, Plagueboiler
- 4CC:** Dimir House Guard, Gaze of the Gorgon, Strands of Undeath
- 5CC:** Scatter the Seeds x 2, Golgari Rotwurm, Sewerdreg
- 6+CC:** Overwhelm

That's a total of 17 very solid cards. While it's a fine start it also leaves quite a lot of room for manoeuvring.

If I'm playing green there's absolutely no way I'm ever leaving out Glare of Subdual. The Glare and the Selesnya Signet to help support it would be my next two automatic inclusions.

That takes us up to nineteen cards in total and even with the Farseek and the Selesnya Signet I think I'd want to play 17 lands here. The deck has a number of expensive cards and doesn't want to miss any land drops early in the game.

So that leaves only three cards to decide upon. What are the choices?

## Choosing the final few

I think there are two basic options here really: to either go for a blue splash or not.



The Dimir splash is helped by the addition of the Aqueduct and the Farseek but it'll still hurt the manabase slightly. The Dimir splash would basically give you access to cards that can Transmute into either Plague Boiler or Glare of Subdual. Having tutors for those cards is fantastic as they're both extremely powerful cards.

This option is very risky though. For it to work you might actually need to draw both splash colours as you'd need to find the blue to search for the Glare and then the white to cast it. With only Farseek, a land and a Signet fixing the mana here that might not be possible.

The other option is just to fill out the deck with whatever on-colour cards we can find. There's already a Dimir House Guard in the deck which can Transmute for the Glare of Subdual and that doesn't require us to find a fourth colour to be able to do that.

The problem with this idea is that there are simply so few cards worth including. We still need to find four more cards to go from the nineteen currently decided upon to the 23 we need.

Sadistic Augermage would be the next probable inclusion, despite its ability hurting both our opponents and us equally. Roofstalker Wight could make it in next even though we'd never have access to blue mana. It would at least give us another early drop to help power up the Scatter the Seeds. I would like to include the good white cards but both the decent flyers require access to double white and that's just as hard to get as the blue is.

Seeds of Strength and Pollenbright Wings could both make it in but the nineteen card build only has nine cards that are (or that make) creatures and so we need to improve upon that.

I think I would again look to the Transmute cards and include one copy of Shred Memory. This can Transmute into Last Gasp or Fists of Ironwood and can also fetch the Farseek or Selesnya Signet to help out with the mana fixing.

Dimir Guildmage is another possible choice as it can be cast for BB and still has one ability we could activate. Golgari Thug is also a possible inclusion but that card has always been awful for my opponents every time they have cast it and I personally wouldn't want to play it.

It's a difficult decision but I think I'd have to pass on the blue cards here. If there was just a Dimir Signet (which could be Transmuted for) or another Farseek or Civic Wayfinder then I would include the blue but I don't think it's possible with this deck.

With that in mind I'd go with the on-colour choice and my personal selection would include the following cards:

Dimir Guildmage – A two mana 2/2 is solid and I think I can cast this often enough for it to be useful. The discard ability is nice to have as well. There's one other reason for including it, which I'll get to in a second.

Sadistic Augermage – An annoying ability but a three mana 3/1 that is easy to cast just can't be ignored in this deck.

Shred Memory – This Transmutes into several different options and you never know, it might one day shut down a Grave-Shell Scarab perhaps.

Roofstalker Wight – Another early drop that increases the creature count and could help power out the Scatter the Seeds.

The hardest card to cut for me was the Pollenbright Wings but with it being in the splash colour, and with so few decent-sized creatures I just don't think it'd have the impact I wanted in this deck. Several of the above cards are a lot worse but the deck needs its higher creature count. One possible option would be the possibility of dropping the Strands of Undeath in place of this. With Plague Boiler and Necroplasm in the deck though, I like the regeneration that card offers.

I would also finally include the Dimir Aqueduct in place of one of the Swamps. This would give me a chance of activating the Guildmage and Wight and wouldn't really hurt the manabase significantly.

Putting these cards in gives the following final deck:



**1CC:** Gather Courage

**2CC:** Roofstalker Wight, Dimir Guildmage, Fists of Ironwood, Last Gasp, Clinging Darkness, Shred Memory, Farseek, Selesnya Signet

**3CC:** Necroplasm, Shambling Shell, Trophy Hunter, Sadistic Augermage, Plagueboiler

**4CC:** Dimir House Guard, Gaze of the Gorgon, Strands of Undeath, Glare of Subdual

**5CC:** Scatter the Seeds x 2, Golgari Rotwurm, Sewerdreg

**6+CC:** Overwhelm

### Limited Information



#### Main Deck

40 cards

1 Dimir Aqueduct	1 Dimir Guildmage	1 Clinging Darkness
7 Forest	1 Dimir House Guard	1 Farseek
1 Plains	1 Fists of Ironwood	1 Gather Courage
8 Swamp	1 Golgari Rotwurm	1 Gaze of the Gorgon
-----	1 Necroplasm	1 Glare of Subdual
17 lands	1 Roofstalker Wight	1 Last Gasp
	1 Sadistic Augermage	1 Overwhelm
	2 Scatter the Seeds	1 Plague Boiler
	1 Sewerdreg	1 Selesnya Signet
	1 Shambling Shell	1 Shred Memory
	1 Trophy Hunter	1 Strands of Undeath
	-----	-----
	12 creatures	11 other spells

While it isn't the best 23 cards I've ever seen it's far from being the worst and there are some powerful cards in there. I feel fairly sure this deck would get you either a 3-2 or a 4-1 finish in a pre-release league, with a 5-0 possible if the Glare turned up more often than not.

I hope you've enjoyed today's little exercise. I'm sure this isn't the only possible build so if you think you have a better one I'd encourage you to share it in the forums.

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