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Now that *Ravnica* has finally arrived online we can at last get down to some real drafting. The triple *Ravnica* format will be the format of choice for the next four months online and with everyone scrambling to find *Ravnica* cards for their new standard format decks the format is going to very popular.

I've already expressed my appreciation of the format in previous columns, but I am still enjoying *Ravnica* drafts immensely and continue to believe this is one of the better Limited formats we've had in the last few years.

Enough preamble, there's no need to explain further as I'm sure you all know the format by now. It's a triple *Ravnica* booster draft so let's get on and open the first pack!

Pack One

The opening pack of the draft presents us with the following goodies:



Pack 1, Pick 1: Golgari Rot Farm, Dogpile, Civic Wayfinder, Sparkmage Apprentice, Nightguard Patrol, Boros Recruit, Quickchange, Infectious Host, Selesnya Signet, Snapping Drake, Dimir Signet, Moroi, Golgari Thug, Drooling Groomion, Helldozer.

My Pick:

Moroi

There are a couple of great cards to choose from here and while I'm sure many players would jump for the rare in this pack that isn't the best pick. Helldozer is nice but it basically is just a vanilla 6/5 monster with a tricky casting cost. The ability may well destroy a land or two but it likely won't do so until turn seven which may be too late to affect the game. If it weren't for the uncommons in the pack I might take it, but I think I might also be inclined to go with Snapping Drake over it.

Both Drooling Groomion and Moroi are superior to all the other cards though and the choice comes down to them. Groomion is very slow, but also very powerful. If you untap with him in play it makes almost any combat unwinnable for your opponent as well as providing removal for cards like Skyknight Legionnaire and Snapping Drake that might avoid tangling in combat.

Moroii is another very powerful card and the extra point of toughness it has over Drooling Grootion is very relevant in this format of Last Gasps and Galvanic Arcs. The point of damage you take each turn is largely irrelevant as you're easily able to outrace an opponent when dealing four in the air. It's also a very nice card to drop on turn three with the help of a Signet.

My choice here is Moroii. I think it is harder to deal with for one, but I also think that a lot of players shy away from blue when drafting and that it might be easier to get that colour than green during the first days of a new drafting format.

Pack 1, Pick 2: Golgari Rot Farm, Sparkmage Apprentice, Civic Wayfinder, Muddle the Mixture, Stinkweed Imp, Grayscaled Gharial, Necromantic Thirst, Perplex, Conclave Equenaut, Golgari Signet, Frenzied Goblin, Rolling Spoil, Watchwolf, Autochthon Wurm.

My Pick:

Watchwolf

Only really Stinkweed Imp from this pack would allow me to stay on colour and I'm not ready to take that guy as a second pick. It's too early to read any signals into this pack and it's therefore wise just to go with the best card. It's a close tie between Conclave Equenaut and Watchwolf for me but Watchwolf is just amazing on turn two in this format. Equenaut is great too, but I think there's a better chance of filling its role with Equenauts and Screeching Griffins later on if we do end up green-white. Great two-drops on the other hand are very hard to come by and I think it's a better pick at this point in time for that reason.

It sucks to take four colours from your first two picks but I may have to abandon Moroii completely and that is just something I'll have to accept if it happens.

Pack 1, Pick 3: Dizzy Spell, Stasis Cell, Fists of Ironwood, Centaur Safeguard, Infectious Host, Rally the Righteous, Elvish Skysweeper, Dimir Signet, Brainspoil, Telling Time, Undercity Shade, Frenzied Goblin, Cloudstone Curio.

My Pick:

Brainspoil

I don't think there is a lot of choice in this pack as Brainspoil is the best remaining card. It's expensive and slow but it does to a very good job of taking out its target. It also can be used to Transmute for other powerful five mana bombs if that situation arises.

Pack 1, Pick 4: Boros Garrison, Tattered Drake, Mortipede, Ordrun Commando, Golgari Rotwurm, Perplex, Gate Hound, Zephyr Spirit, Disembowel, Vindictive Mob, Blockbuster, Reroute.

My Pick:

Disembowel



Another very obvious pick here, with a solid removal spell coming 'round as a fourth pick. It's a little surprising that Disembowel is still here, especially with a Rotworm present too but that's a very good signal for me. It suggests that only one of the previous three drafters is black and that there might be two Boros drafters to the right of me, as I think many Selesnya players would definitely have taken the Disembowel as it's easily splashable via the Golgari guild cards.

The fourth pick Disembowel makes me feel very confident I'm in the right colour combination and it's an easy decision to take it.

Pack 1, Pick 5: Terrarion, Woodwraith Strangler, Surveilling Sprite, Dimir House Guard, Sabertooth Alley Cat, Zephyr Spirit, Lurking Informant, Surge of Zeal, Root-Kin Ally, Recollect, Wojek Apothecary.

My Pick:

Dimir House Guard

There's no reason to deviate from the black plan at the moment. I'm still planning on drafting Dimir at this point in time but I'm prepared to go Golgari with a blue splash if that option gets forced upon me.

With that in mind Dimir House Guard is clearly the best pick here. The fact that it Transmutes into a 4/4 flyer already isn't something to be overlooked either.

Pack 1, Pick 6: Stasis Cell, Vedalken Dismissor, Dimir House Guard, Seismic Spike, Elvish Skysweeper, Boros Recruit, Transluminant, Snapping Drake, Perilous Forays, Remand.

My Pick:

Snapping Drake

This is another pack that boosts my confidence in my colour choice. There are five cards here that could easily make the main deck of a Dimir deck and having that many options for your sixth pick isn't too common. At this point in time I'm fairly certain I won't be planning to mill anyone to death and I therefore want to continue the theme of aggressive, evasive creatures. Snapping Drake is the best card in the pack to fit in with that theme and I'm happy to add another solid flyer to the card pool.

Pack 1, Pick 7: Terrarion, Woodwraith Strangler, Incite Hysteria, Scatter the Seeds, Shred Memory, Surge of Zeal, Golgari Brownscale, Netherborn Phalanx, Glass Golem.

My Pick:

Netherborn Phalanx

A late Scatter the Seeds is going to be a nice gift for someone but it isn't a card I'd think about taking at this point. Netherborn Phalanx is expensive but I will regularly play it in the main deck. Against Selesnya, and even opposing Golgari decks it can often deal them a lot of a damage when they're sitting behind a horde of Saprolings and I've had several games decided on the back of this card.



Sometimes it will sit in the sideboard if the main deck is good enough but it's a main deck card in most situations.

I also really like having another card that can Transmute into something useful. This can always go and fetch a Vedalken Dismissal if the situations warrants it but we might get lucky and open something like a Cerulean Sphinx that this will go fetch too.

Pack 1, Pick 8: Stasis Cell, Roofstalker Wight, Leave No Trace, Zephyr Spirit, Boros Recruit, Sell-Sword Brute, Wojek Apothecary, Golgari Germination.

My pick:

Roofstalker Wight

Another fairly simple pick here. I need two-drops and having a two-drop that can take to the air in the late game is just what the doctor ordered. Roofstalker Wight is an easy choice over Stasis Cell.

Pack 1, Pick 9: Golgari Rot Farm, Dogpile, Quickchange, Infectious Host, Selesnya Signet, Dimir Signet, Golgari Thug.

My Pick:

Dimir Signet

I don't like my two-drops to be 1/1s with mediocre abilities, especially when they can cost me a draw step when an opponent happens to have a Sparkmage Apprentice in hand. If I get a Golgari Thug very late I might play it but at this point I'd much rather have the Signet to give my four-drops the chance to come out a turn earlier.

Pack 1, Pick 10: Golgari Rot Farm, Muddle the Mixture, Grayscaled Gharial, Necromantic Thirst, Perplex, Golgari Signet.

My Pick:

Golgari Signet

I always like picking up guild lands and Signets as late picks as these help you immensely during deck construction when you're trying to squeeze a third colour into your deck. While I don't have anything that might warrant the inclusion of the Golgari Signet at this point in time it does open up more possibilities for the rest of the draft and is my choice because of that.

Late picks: Undercity Shade, Perplex, Surveilling Sprite, Vedalken Dismissal.

There are some very nice late picks here with several of the above cards potentially making the deck. You tend to know for sure that you're in the right colours when the filler cards like Surveilling Sprite and Vedalken Dismissal make it all the way around the table back to you.

So far the playable cards I have amount to this:

1CC: Disembowel

2CC: Roofstalker Wight, Surveilling Sprite, Golgari Signet

3CC: Perplex

4CC: Moroi, Dimir House Guard, Snapping Drake

5CC: Undercity Shade, Brainspoil

6CC: Vedalken Dismissal, Netherborn Phalanx

Land: Golgari Rot Farm

There's a high mana curve here already and the deck is in need of three-drops at this point in time. Drift of Phantasms is a card I'm definitely on the look out for in the next set of packs to fill that hole. Many of the above cards I don't want to have to include in the main deck but they'll hopefully get replaced by better cards as the draft progresses.

Time to move on to the second pack.

Pack Two

The second pack gets opened to reveal:



Pack 2, Pick 1: Dimir Aqueduct, Courier Hawk, Convolute, Bramble Elemental, Ordrun Commando, Nightguard Patrol, Goblin Spelunkers, Rally the Righteous, Dromad Purebred, Shambling Shell, Fiers Conclusion, Flame-Kin Zealot, Telling Time, Undercity Shade, Hunted Lammasu.

My Pick:

Telling Time

Well, not exactly what I was hoping for. It's rare to get a pack this bad for your opening pick but it does happen and when it does you've just got to suck it up and make the best of it.

Hunted Lammasu is a powerful rare but isn't something I'd consider taking here. It's never making the deck and there's at least one card in here that might. While I appreciate some players might take it for it's monetary value you don't need me to tell you the dollar value of specific cards if that's your preferred option.

I only deal in the strategic value of cards and that makes Telling Time my choice from this pack. It's a nice little cantrip that helps smooth out your draws in the early game and helps you dig for something useful when you draw it later on too. It'll probably make the main deck as it's a great filler card and effectively shrinks the deck by a card meaning I'll stand a better chance of drawing into my best cards.

Pack 2, Pick 2: Strands of Undeath, Barbarian Riftcutter, Terrarion, Sabertooth Alley Cat, Bramble Elemental, Benevolent Ancestor, Quickchange, Sewerdreg, Seismic Spike, Seeds of Strength, Galvanic Arc, Festival of the Guildpact, Golgari Thug, Spawnbroker.

My Pick:

Galvanic Arc

Here's another pack that really has nothing to offer. Strands of Undeath is the best playable card but it definitely isn't something I'm prepared to take this early. I don't anticipate the need to give my guys regeneration as I expect the evasion they have to make it unnecessary. I also would much prefer to spend four mana making another flyer rather than this card and wouldn't want to include this in the deck. Sewerdreg makes a reasonable sideboard card but again, I feel the deck will have plenty of evasion anyway and I might not even want a five mana 3/3 after boarding.

I therefore take the best card in the pack for a potential splash. Galvanic Arc is tricky to splash here as there are no guild cards to help do that, but it still might be possible. Cards like Terraformer could help cast it and I can just run the old '2 x Mountain' plan as well. While I don't anticipate including it in the deck it's just as likely an inclusion as Strands of Undeath and Sewerdreg and at least this way I'm taking one of the best commons away from another drafter.



I don't really consider this to be a hate draft, as I'm not taking it over another card I'd want to have and there is still an outside chance it will make the main deck.

Pack 2, Pick 3: Goblin Spelunkers, Greater Mossdog, Selesnya Sanctuary, Sadistic Augermage, Thoughtpicker Witch, Goblin Fire Fiend, Sundering Vitae, Selesnya Signet, Veteran Armorer, Dimir Signet, Stoneshaker Shaman, Recollect, Hunted Horror.

My Pick:

Greater Mossdog

At this point in time I'm getting a little concerned about the lack of playable cards coming my way. I don't see how it's possible how the player to my left is drafting both of my colours. They're clearly going to be drafting Golgari after passing them Drooling Grootion and Golgari Rotwurm in pack one, so I expect to have black cut off from me in this direction, but not blue as well. I just hope that the first three packs were simply lacking in playable blue cards.

I hope I don't have to note that Hunted Horror is completely unplayable in draft. There are just far too many cards that answer it, and your opponent can probably outrace it just by attacking with the 3/3 Pro-black dorks you give him. Try casting this on turn two, and then taking 6 from the two Centaurs, and finally having your first attack from this guy met with a Boros Fury-Shield. That's one of just many ways that Hunted Horror can give your opponent a free game win.

With no on colour cards to play I look to the possible Golgari splash for something playable. Stoneshaker Shaman is nice but I don't plan on having any enchantments in the deck (if I splashed the Green, I definitely wouldn't splash for the Galvanic Arc too) and so finally settle on Greater

Mossgod. It's not a card I want to be playing but if things continue to be this bad I might have to.

That's what I was thinking at the time. In retrospect, it was clearly better to take the Dimir Signet. Though the first couple packs this direction hadn't worked out so far, it wasn't time to panic yet. With nothing else playable to take the Mossgod makes sense, but the Signet fits right into my deck, helping out the curve and even improving my mana if a splash does turn out to be needed. (It's easier to include some Mountains for Galvanic Arc when you already have two signets in your main colours.) It's a good lesson though. Sometimes even when you are sure you've set your position up well, the packs may not cooperate. The trick is knowing when to jump ship, and in this pack there was a good enough option for my existing deck that I didn't need to resort to green yet.



Pack 2, Pick 4: Boros Garrison, War-Torch Goblin, Boros Fury-Shield, Goblin Fire Fiend, Perplex, Gate Hound, Skyknight Legionnaire, Peel from Reality, Seeds of Strength, Halcyon Glaze, Darkblast, Stoneshaker Shaman.

My Pick:

Halcyon Glaze

Finally the blue cards show up! Halcyon Glaze is an easy pick over Darkblast here as I'd already mentioned that this deck was lacking three-drops and what better three-drop to have than another 4/4 flyer. This is a great card to get as fourth pick and adds a lot of power to the deck.

Pack 2, Pick 5: Terraformer, Consult the Necrosages, Barbarian Riftcutter, Sabertooth Alley Cat, Gather Courage, Boros Fury-Shield, Caregiver, Dizzy Spell, Thoughtpicker Witch, Clutch of the Undercity, Voyager Staff.

My Pick:

Clutch of the Undercity

There are a few options here but only one of them fits in well with the aggressive nature of the deck. This deck will likely win a lot of games on tempo alone as it makes its evasive threats and hopes to outrace the ground-based creatures. Clutch of the Undercity is a card that helps this goal considerably as it sets the opponent back a turn by bouncing their most expensive man while also taking a sizeable chunk out of their life total at the same time.

It's a great card for this type of deck and is a better choice than Terraformer or Consult the Necrosages right here.

Pack 2, Pick 6: Roofstalker Wight, Torpid Moloch, Guardian of Vitu-Ghazi, Muddle the Mixture, Sadistic Augermage, Dimir Infiltrator, Necromantic Thirst, Goblin Fire Fiend, Boros Signet, Overwhelm.

My Pick:

Roofstalker Wight

With not very much to choose from I'm happy to take the two-power two-drop to help fill out the mana curve of the deck.

Pack 2, Pick 7: Dimir Aqueduct, Courier Hawk, Convoluted, Thundersong Trumpeter, Gather Courage, Thoughtpicker Witch, Seismic Spike, Elvish Skysweeper, Leashling.

My Pick:

Dimir Aqueduct

While Thoughtpicker Witch might be vaguely playable in the mill deck it definitely isn't playable in this deck. I therefore go with the guild land which will help with the colour fixing and perhaps also help ramp up to six mana in those games where a sixth land isn't forthcoming.

Pack 2, Pick 8: Boros Garrison, Induce Paranoia, Mortipede, Stone-Seeder Hierophant, Leave no Trace, Drake Familiar, Seeds of Strength, Flight of Fancy.

My Pick:

Flight of Fancy

Once again this isn't the deck for either Induce Paranoia or Drake Familiar. Both of those cards can be playable in the right deck but not here. Flight of Fancy is the only card that might be playable and that gets added to the pile as a result.

Pack 2, Pick 9: Bramble Elemental, Ordrun Commando, Nightguard Patrol, Dromad Purepred, Fiery Conclusion, Flame-Kin Zealot, Undercity Shade.

My Pick:

Undercity Shade

There's only one possible pick from this pack and that's the Shade. I don't have any creatures at five mana right now and the shade isn't good, but can give some excellent added evasion against a Selesnya deck.

Pack 2, Pick 10: Barbarian Riftcutter, Terrarion, Sabertooth Alley Cat, Quickchange, Seismic Spike, Seeds of Strength.

My Pick:

Terrarion

Seeds of Strength really shouldn't be going around this late but I don't feel any need to take it away. I want the Terrarion as it's another random card that I might want as filler to slim down the deck and get me to my better cards that little bit more quickly.

Late Picks: Sadistic Augermage, Peel from Reality, Dizzy Spell, Muddle the Mixture, Seismic Spike.

Not so many late picks this time although the Peel from Reality is a welcome addition and another card I might want to include in the deck.

Adding these cards to the pool gives the following selection:

1CC: Disembowel, Terrarion

2CC: Roofstalker Wight x 2, Surveilling Sprite, Golgari Signet, Telling Time, Peel from Reality

3CC: Halcyon Glaze, Perplex

4CC: Moroi, Dimir House Guard, Snapping Drake, Greater Mossdog, Clutch of the Undercity, Flight of Fancy

5CC: Undercity Shade x 2, Brainspoil

6CC: Vedalken Dismissal, Netherborn Phalanx

Land: Golgari Rot Farm, Dimir Aqueduct

The deck is looking reasonable, although still light at the three mana slot. I'd like to get another Signet so I can run 16 lands and two signets and hopefully not need the three mana slot quite so much. Given the great late picks in pack one I'm optimistic that I should be able to get a few nice late picks in pack three as well.

Pack Three



Pack 3, Pick 1: Drift of Phantasms, Strands of Undeath, Coalhauler Swine, Surveilling Sprite, Clinging Darkness, Gate Hound, Lurking Informant, Sewerdreg, Elves of Deep Shadow, Selesnya Evangel, Peel from Reality, Congregation at Dawn, Sandsower, Psychic Drain, Plague Boiler.

My Pick:

Plague Boiler

It's always nice to open a great rare in your colours. Psychic Drain would have probably been the pick over Plague Boiler if I were trying to mill someone to death. This deck isn't going to do that though, and the Plague Boiler is a great reset button. It makes the addition of the Golgari Rotfarm that much nicer too as that gives us a way to manipulate the counters on the Boiler. It can either be set off a turn earlier or perhaps just sit around on two counters indefinitely waiting for an opponent to over-commit.

Pack 3, Pick 2: Guardian of Vitu-Ghazi, Viashino Slasher, Farseek, Fists of Ironwood, War-Torch Goblin, Screeching Griffin, Quickchange, Infectious Host, Selesnya Evangel, Golgari Signet, Viashino Fangtail, Golgari Guildmage, Ribbons of the Night, Hex.

My Pick:

Hex

One good rare deserves another it seems! I can definitely see passing this third pack if you're a Boros deck although I'm sure the player on my right hated to do that. Hex is just an amazing card in this format. Sometimes you can't cast it because there are too few creatures around but when you can, it wins the game. I've heard rumours of games won through an opposing Hex but I've never witnessed such an event myself.

It's a shame to pass up Ribbons of the Night but when you are passing a card as good as that for something even better you can't be disappointed.

Remember also when I mentioned about having a nice spread of your Transmute costs? That Netherborn Phalanx is looking a lot better now, that's for sure.

Pack 3, Pick 3: Drift of Phantasms, Strands of Undeath, Bramble Elemental, Sundering Vitae, Caregiver, Dizzy Spell, Compulsive Research, Last Gasp, Golgari Germination, Vigor Mortis, Flash Conscription, Spawn Broker.

My Pick:

Last Gasp

Another excellent removal spell comes my way in this pack. There's nothing else in the pack to compete with Last Gasp although I really would've been happy with the Drift of Phantasms too.

Pack 3, Pick 4: Golgari Rot Farm, Consult the Necrosages, Tattered Drake, Surveilling Sprite, Terraformer, Smash, Golgari Brownscale, Conclave's Blessing, Siege Wurm, Peel from Reality, Halcyon Glaze, Flash Conscription.

My Pick:

Halcyon Glaze

Is there such a thing as too many 4/4 flyers? Certainly not when they only cost three or four mana. This is quite late for a Glaze to arrive in your lap but given the late arrival of the blue cards in pack one I can't say I'm surprised.

With four or five other playable cards in the booster I'm optimistic that I might see something for the deck come around the table from this pack.

Pack 3, Pick 5: Guardian of Vitu-Ghazi, Viashino Slasher, Farseek, Tidewater Minion, Sadistic Augermage, Scatter the Seeds, Conclave's Blessing, Dimir Infiltrator, Necromantic Thirst, Siege Wurm, Rolling Spoil.

My Pick:

Dimir Infiltrator



The Tidewater Minion would definitely be the pick for a Dimir milling deck but I'd much rather have the Dimir Infiltrator from this pack. It can stall early ground beaters and then nip in for a few points of unblockable damage when you need it to.

I can even transmute it into a Last Gasp or a Peel from Reality if I would rather have one of those spells instead.

Pack 3, Pick 6: Votary of the Conclave, Dimir House Guard, Boros Recruit, Fists of Ironwood, Dryad's Caress, Caregiver, Drake Familiar, Boros Signet, Leashling, Darkblast.

My Pick:

Dimir House Guard

While Darkblast is very good I personally want the extra evasion creature from this pack. I'd often take Darkblast over Dimir House Guard but I think I'm doing OK on the removal front while I would like some more evasive creatures and some more creatures in general now that I have to two Halcyon Glazes I want to be able to activate regularly.

Pack 3, Pick 7: Farseek, Woodwraith Strangler, Induce Paranoia, Incite Hysteria, Centaur Safeguard, Elvish Skysweeper, Conclave's Blessing, Dimir Signet, Instill Furor.

My Pick:

Dimir Signet

This pack contains the second Signet I was looking for and I'm happy to scoop that up with nothing else playable in the pack for me.

Pack 3, Pick 8: Dogpile, Selesnya Sanctuary, Tidewater Minion, Lurking Informant, Surge of Zeal, Sundering Vitae, Compulsive Research, Nullmage Shepherd.

My Pick:

Compulsive Research

Another Tidewater Minion here but it isn't needed for this deck. The Compulsive Research is a much better option as it'll generate some card advantage and let me dig deeper in the deck, giving me more chances of finding the Phalanx or the Hex.

Pack 3, Pick 9: Strands of Undeath, Surveilling Sprite, Clinging Darkness, Gate Hound, Lurking Informant, Elves of Deep Shadow, Peel from Reality.

My Pick:

Clinging Darkness

Another fine removal spell comes 'round extremely late here. Seems like all the black players must be on my left and passed on this for the more powerful cards in the pack. It's very surprising to see it lap and suggests that probably none of the four players on my right are playing black.

Late Picks: Golgari Guildmage, Compulsive Research, Golgari Rotfarm, Terraformer

The Deck

Adding all of those picks from the third pack to the card pool gives:

1CC: Disembowel, Terrarion

2CC: Roofstalker Wight x 2, Surveilling Sprite, Dimir Infiltrator, Golgari Signet, Dimir Signet x 2, Telling Time, Last Gasp, Clinging Darkness, Peel from Reality

3CC: Halcyon Glaze x 2, Perplex, Plague Boiler, Compulsive Research x 2, Terraformer

4CC: Moroi, Dimir House Guard x 2, Snapping Drake, Clutch of the Undercity, Flight of Fancy

5CC: Undercity Shade, Brainspoil

6CC: Vedalken Dismissal, Netherborn Phalanx, Hex

Land: Golgari Rot Farm, Dimir Aqueduct

Not including the lands that's a total of 32 playable cards, which gives a lot of choice when it comes to deck building.

The first run through I make takes out the worst of the cards in the pile that will get left out simply in favour of better cards. Terrarion, Perplex, and Flight of Fancy are the first to go.


I next make the decision that I want to run 16 lands – including the two guild lands – along with two Signets. One of the Dimir Signets therefore gets cut, as I want to include a Golgari Signet because of the Guildmage and the Plague Boiler.

That's 28 spells left, and 24 needed for the deck.

With two Halcyon Glazes in the deck I'd much rather cut spells than creatures. I still want to include the card drawers though as I want to increase my chances of drawing into Moroi, Plague Boiler and Hex. I decide to cut the Peel from Reality and Clutch of the Undercity first. I feel that there's enough removal in the deck to survive without these spells and I'd rather just have other creatures. I also cut one of the Compulsive Researches. I'd rather have the Telling Time in my opening hand as it increases the chances of a third turn Halcyon Glaze while still digging the same depth through the deck in the late game. While it doesn't provide the same card advantage it's cheaper to cast and instant too, which makes it a better inclusion for me.

With those gone there's just one left card to cut. I eventually decide on the Terraformer as it is probably one of the weaker creatures in the deck.

Putting this all together gives the following decklist:

Limited Information		
		
Main Deck <i>40 cards</i>		
1 Dimir Aqueduct	2 Dimir House Guard	1 Brainspoil
1 Golgari Rot Farm	1 Dimir Infiltrator	1 Clinging Darkness

7 Island	1 Golgari Guildmage	1 Compulsive Research	
7 Swamp	1 Moroi	1 Dimir Signet	
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16 lands	1 Netherborn Phalanx	1 Disembowel	
	2 Roofstalker Wight	1 Golgari Signet	
	1 Snapping Drake	2 Halcyon Glaze	
	1 Surveilling Sprite	1 Hex	
	1 Undercity Shade	1 Last Gasp	
	1 Vedalken Dismissal	1 Plague Boiler	
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	12 creatures	1 Telling Time	
		<hr/>	
		12 other spells	

Round 1

I win the flip this game and start with a Roofstalker Wight on turn two and one of the Halcyon Glazes on turn three. My opponent passes his third turn with two Plains and a Mountain open, which just screams Devouring Light to me. As a result I elect to hold back the Glaze and just develop my board with a Signet while attacking for two.

Another turn of draw, attack, go takes place and then I finally elect to cast an Undercity Shade on turn five as I figure even if my opponent has the Light, I still then have a Shade and a flyer. Sure enough, he has the Devouring Light and it's bye-bye Halcyon Glaze. He's on 12 already though, and still facing two evasion men while I still have plenty of gas in hand. He has a Conclave Equenaut on his next turn but the Dismissal undoes that while allowing me to drop him to 12. The next turn the Equenaut takes it's Last Gasp and that's basically all she wrote.



In game two I again have the Halcyon Glaze in hand and elect not to make my Infiltrator on turn two when my opponent inexplicably elects to draw first. The Glaze comes down on turn three and gets powered up by the Infiltrator and the Undercity Shade on subsequent turns. One of the attacks sees the damage thrown back at me via a Boros Fury-Shield but I'm quite happy for my opponent to spend a turn and a card doing that so early in the game.

Faith's Fetters takes care of the Shade but the Glaze continues to hit thanks to a Surveilling Sprite. I still have my Netherborn Phalanx in hand along with a Clinging Darkness that soon takes out an opposing Ordrun Commando. I then get a little lucky and peel my Peel (from Reality), which returns my Shade to my hand along with an opposing blocker giving me another guy to switch on the Glaze next turn. My opponent is behind on tempo and lacking answers to either the Shade, the Glaze or even the Infiltrator, and the game ends the following turn with the Phalanx.

Round 2

Another game, another coin flip won. My opponent is playing Boros again and opens with a Veteran Armorer and Viashino Slasher. This time a second turn Telling Time for me sets up the third turn Halcyon Glaze. Moroi threatens to really make things unfair but I elect to block the Veteran Armorer

with it to not get too behind on the damage race as Boros Fury-Shield and Rally the Righteous can easily swing close damage races in favour of the Boros deck. My opponent shows me a Lightning Helix to finish off Moroi but I'm happy with that two-for-one trade.

The Netherborn Phalanx shows up to allow the Glaze to deal another four while stalling the ground and dealing three itself.

My opponent stalled for one turn with a Festival of the Guildpact and at that point I ran out of creatures with him sitting on a precarious two life. I top-decked Plague Boiler at this point and along with the Golgari Rot Farm I was able to pop it up to two counters right away and then remove one every turn to stop it blowing up the world. My opponent had to wait to draw some men to get past the Phalanx while I drew lands for a couple of turns and sat behind the Plague Boiler.

I finally draw a creature – a Dimir House Guard – but my opponent had a Boros Fury-Shield for the subsequent Halcyon Glaze attack. He made a mistake playing it though, as he waited until damage was on the stack and perhaps wasn't aware of the interaction with my freshly cast Dimir House Guard. Because he waited until damage was on the stack I was able to simply sacrifice the Halcyon Glaze to the House Guard and fizzle the Boros Fury-Shield. Damage then resolved normally to take game one. If he'd just cast the Shield before combat damage I couldn't really sacrifice the Glaze (as I needed it to win) and he would've prevented its damage and dealt me four, definitely giving him at least another turn.



On to game two, where my opponent led with Veteran Armorer while I had my Infiltrator to block. Two Viashino Slashers combined nicely with the Armorer and became even more threatening when a Sunhome, Fortress of the Legion showed up for my opponent. My hand was full of tricks though with Disembowel, Peel from Reality and Last Gasp all present. The next activation of the Sunhome on a creature met with the Disembowel and a wasted turn from my opponent. A Glaze then showed up to provide some offence.

Just as I was planning to activate the Glaze the second came off the top! I obviously waited a turn before casting my guys. A Surveilling Sprite let the Glazes hit for eight, then a Roofstalker Wight let them hit for eight more. During my opponent's next turn I blocked both his men with the Sprite and Roofstalker Wight and used the Peel to bounce one of his unblocked guys and my Wight. The Wight let the Hazes hit for eight more and make sure one Boros Fury-Shield would not be enough to stop a second 2-0 win.

Round 3

The first game was all about setting up Hex. I drew it on turn two while casting my Surveilling Sprite. I had another Boros opponent this round but his Boros Recruit and Veteran Armorer stayed at home when a third turn Infiltrator came down for me. A Skyknight Legionnaire started hitting and then a second showed up to join it. I took the damage for one turn while making a Dimir House Guard of my own. My opponent was then kind enough to make a Viashino Fangtail that allowed me to Hex away all five of his men along with my Surveilling Sprite. Hopefully no further explanation is required as to the outcome of that game!

The second game demonstrated the value of the two Signets that were included. A second turn Signet allowed me to get Moroi in play against an opposing Nightguard Patrol. My opponent didn't even try

and bluff a trick with an attack and the Patrol stayed at home. I had an Undercity Shade on turn four and then the Vedalken Dismissal on turn five. There's not much an opponent can do about that draw and with no removal coming from his side of the board the game ended on turn seven.

Wrapping Up

Overall the deck felt very powerful. The two Glazes showed up a lot but with two in the deck and some card drawing too that isn't all that surprising. They were both excellent and dealt tons of damage. Getting them both quite late suggests maybe people are undervaluing them slightly but I doubt that'll continue for long.

The other cards in the deck all fulfilled their role. It's interesting that I often had the Phalanx in hand but never once needed to Transmute it into the Hex. Perhaps if I had been up against a Selesnya deck things would've been different. With the Phalanx and the card drawing in the deck I could've potentially cast Hex in every match with this deck and feel confident that the deck could've taken on anything.

The last card I want to note is Vedalken Dismissal. This guy is a fine inclusion in any aggressive deck and yet I somehow managed to pull one 15th pick. Some people perhaps ignore him as a six mana 2/2 but the 'Time Ebb' effect is powerful and getting a 2/2 body attached isn't something to complain about. Overall the card is quite fairly costed; think how good it would be compared to Kiri-Onna from *Saviours of Kamigawa* at only five mana.

The sheer number of evasion creatures in this deck was very good, with 11 of the 14 men being able to attack through the defence of most decks. I think that too is a key factor when it comes to drafting the damage-based Dimir decks. Roofstalker Wight and Dimir Infiltrator are both solid little two drops that are useful in the early game while still able to deal damage when drawn later on too.

Overall, a very nice deck and a 6-0 game performance to back it up. Dimir was definitely underdrafted at that table and it was clearly the right colours to be in. Next time you open up a Moroi this is exactly the sort of deck you might want to think about aiming for.



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