



Pointing Out the Obvious

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Latest Developments
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I've been having a good time with **Magic** lately. You might think that because working on **Magic** is my job that I always have a good time with it. But that's not entirely true—anything has its ups and downs, and sometimes being too close to the game drives me away for a time. But not lately.

Last weekend I played in a “draft marathon” at a local card shop, in which I drafted the full *Invasion* block, the full *Odyssey* block, the full *Mirrodin* block, and then *Ravnica*. Although I didn't do well enough to make the top 8 (I'm gradually losing my competitive focus), I still had a ball. At work, on top of developing the upcoming “Snap” set and starting up design for the block after that, I've been working on the theme decks for the upcoming *Coldsnap* expansion, which are quite a trip down memory lane. The [first-ever Legacy Grand Prix](#)—something I've been pushing for personally for a long time—was a fantastic event. I'm making arrangements to attend Worlds in Japan in a couple weeks. And my old pal John Rizzo has resurfaced over at [StarCityGames](#).



Fun times indeed. A perfect time, then, to have my readers do something fun as well.

At the draft marathon, several of the players were telling me that they enjoyed *Ravnica* Limited so much because so many of the cards were hard to evaluate correctly in Limited. That got me thinking. Then I read that Scott Wills was leaving this site, so I started perusing his archive. And that also got me thinking. Then I had to turn in my Limited pointing results for Snap to Matt Place, and that *really* got me thinking. Why not do another Limited pointing article?

What is Limited pointing? It's a way for **Magic** developers to gauge the power level of individual colors for both sealed deck and draft. Each developer assigns a number to each card based on how powerful he perceives it to be, then those numbers are averaged and analyzed in an attempt to balance things out. Here's a snippet from the relevant section of our Developer's Handbook explaining the scale we use:

...[H]ere is the fundamental definition of our rating: Given that this is the first card you see (of your 75-card sealed deck or first pack, first pick in draft), how happy are you – on a scale of 0.0 - 5.0 – to see it? Furthermore, your ratings should be linear (that is, you'd be just as happy with a 3.5 and a 2.5 or with two 3.0's). Also, to be technically correct, this all assumes that your goal is to win – winning makes you “happy.”

The following elaborations of this scale are merely guidelines, designed to clarify the scale defined above:

- 5.0:** I will always play this card. Period.
- 4.5:** I will almost always play this card, regardless of what else I get.
- 4.0:** I will strongly consider playing this as the only card of its color.
- 3.5:** I feel a strong pull into this card's color.
- 3.0:** This card makes me want to play this color. (Given that I'm playing that color, I will play this card 100% of the time.)
- 2.5:** Several cards of this power level start to pull me into this color. If playing that color, I essentially always play these. (Given that I'm playing that color, I will play this card 90% of the time.)
- 2.0:** If I'm playing this color, I usually play these. (70%)
- 1.5:** This card will make the cut into the main deck about half the times I play this color. (50%)
- 1.0:** I feel bad when this card is in my main deck. (30%)
- 0.5:** There are situations where I might sideboard this into my deck, but I'll never start it. (10%)
- 0.0:** I will never put this card into my deck (main deck or after sideboarding). (0%)

Here are some examples from the recent *Kamigawa* block to help you understand the scale.

- **Umezawa's Jitte** – 5.0. Always played, always first picked, always ridiculous.



- **Meloku, the Clouded Mirror** – 4.0. You can easily imagine playing Meloku as your only blue card in a sealed deck, and being very happy doing so.
- **Kokusho, the Evening Star** – 3.5. He makes you want to play black, and you'll always run him if you are black.
- **Glacial Ray** – 2.75. Some people may point it even higher than this.
- **Mothrider Samurai** – 1.75. There are times when you'd play white and not run this guy, but they're rare.
- **Sakura-Tribe Scout** – 0.75. You don't want to play this guy, but it happens.
- **One with Nothing** – 0.0. 'Nuff said.

Got it? Now it's your turn. Take a look at the cards below, then enter your results into the Limited Pointing Survey.

We'll start off with a chunk of blue commons. Take a look at this list and come up with a rating for each one:

- **Stasis Cell**
- **Surveilling Sprite**
- **Tattered Drake**
- **Terraformer**
- **Tidewater Minion**
- **Vedalken Dismissal**

Next up are gold uncommons, which, as a whole, may be the most powerful group of Limited cards in the set. Where do these rate?

- **Lightning Helix**
- **Moroii**
- **Pollenbright Wings**
- **Psychic Drain**
- **Putrefy**
- **Selesnya Sagittars**

Finally, here are some black rares. Rares are interesting, as they are often hit-or-miss in Limited. Just how good are these six?

- **Blood Funnel**
- **Dark Confidant**
- **Empty the Catacombs**
- **Helldozer**
- **Hex**
- **Hunted Horror**



You can click [here](#) to enter your results in the Limited Pointing Survey. I'll compile the results, then compare the readers vs. R&D in a future article. Have fun!

Last Week's Poll

Which is the better draft format in general?			
Big set / small set 1 / small set 2	3520	42.1%	
Big set / big set / big set	2998	35.9%	
I don't draft	1511	18.1%	
Neither	331	4.0%	
Total	8360	100.0%	

That's my pick as well. This has been an ongoing argument here in R&D as we talk with Organized Play about scheduling future events.

Pointing Poll

- Stasis Cell**
- Surveilling Sprite**
- Tattered Drake**
- Terraformer**
- Tidewater Minion**
- Vedalken Dismissal**
- Lightning Helix**
- Moroii**
- Pollenbright Wings**

- Psychic Drain ▾
- Putrefy ▾
- Selesnya Sagittars ▾
- Blood Funnel ▾
- Dark Confidant ▾
- Empty the Catacombs ▾
- Helldozer ▾
- Hex ▾
- Hunted Horror ▾

*Aaron Forsythe was a professional **Magic** player and Internet columnist prior to leaving Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to join Wizards of the Coast. His first duty here was Content Manager of this very website, a job that required him to do actual work as opposed to playing games all the time. So when a position opened in R&D, he jumped at the chance. He is now director of **Magic** R&D., and still plays **Magic** in his free time when he's not busy playing **Magic**.*



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