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Kiki-ing the FFA

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Into the Aether
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(Breaking news! If you haven't seen the new [banned/restricted list](#) yet, go take a look. There are a few bannings for Prismatic, and a big change for Tribal Wars. Done? Great! Now, on with Bennie Smith and Into the Aether!)

When my schedule opened up and it looked like I'd be able to play in the upcoming FFA, I was really looking forward to it. I had had a ball last time I played ([Sunday Night FFA](#)); then the format was Singleton Extended, this time it was regular extended.

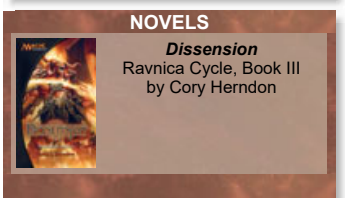
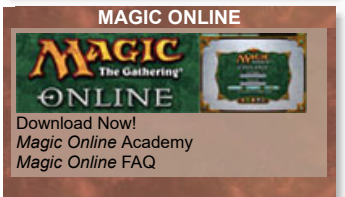
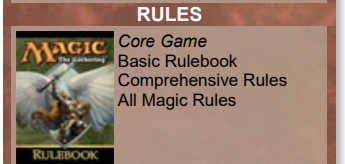
These events are timed, so again I wanted to make sure I wasn't going to have too much going on that didn't directly contribute to a overwhelming victory, which ruled out favorites like [Sensei's Divining Top](#) and too much deck searching. Recently, I had been testing [Kiki-Jiki, Mirror Breaker](#) for Regionals and had rediscovered my love for that five-mana 2/2 goblin legend; while he didn't make the cut for my Regionals deck, I decided he'd be great to build an Extended deck around. With cards like [Eternal Witness](#), [Goblin Flectomancer](#) and [Mystic Snake](#) to copy, I'd have a ball. This is what I ended up taking to the event:



Kicks, by IntoTheAether (Extended Free-for-all)

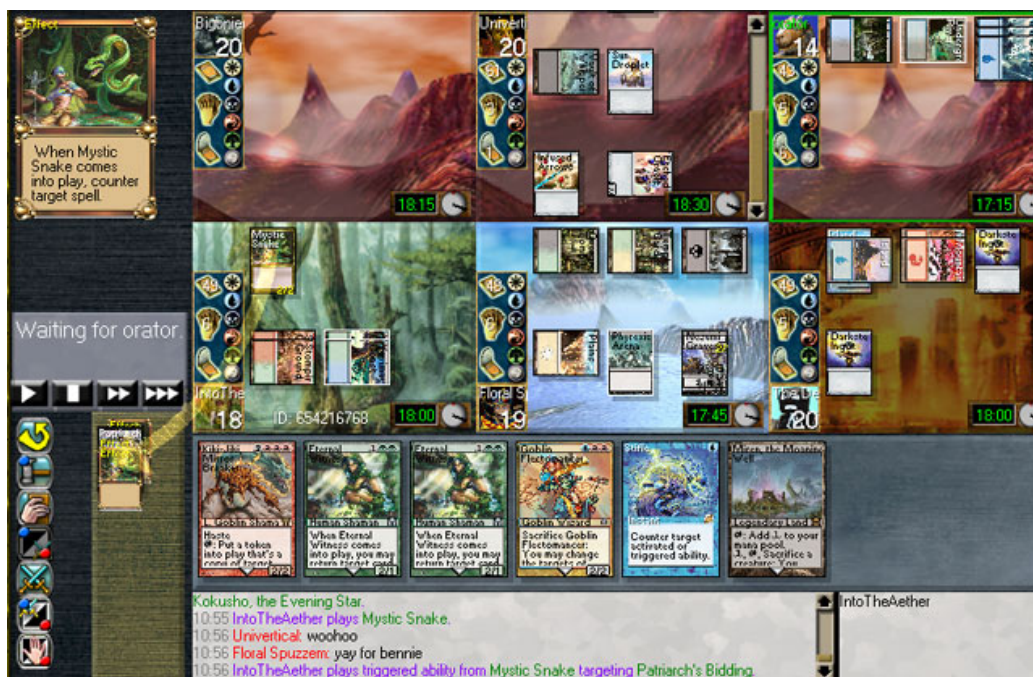
60 cards

5 Forest	4 Carven Caryatid	2 Stifle
1 Island	3 Daring Apprentice	
1 Minamo, School at Water's Edge	4 Elvish Piper	2 other spells
1 Miren, the Moaning Well	3 Eternal Witness	
1 Mountain	3 Goblin Flectomancer	
1 Okina, Temple to the Grandfathers	4 Kiki-Jiki, Mirror Breaker	
2 Skarrg, the Rage Pits	4 Mystic Snake	
4 Steam Vents	4 Sakura-Tribe Elder	
4 Stomping Ground	1 Seedborn Muse	
4 Yavimaya Coast	1 Seeker of Skybreak	
	1 Siege-Gang Commander	
	2 Wirewood Herald	
24 land	34 creatures	



There's a big crowd for the event, with 6 tables of 6 players for the first round, and the winner of each table playing another 6-man for the title. My opponents in round 1 are: Floral Spuzzem, Bigbnier, Univertical, orator, and The Dupucelater.

My opening hand is pretty sweet, with [Sakura-Tribe Elder](#) to accelerate and the mana to cast [Kiki-Jiki](#) on turn 4 (and a few tasty copying targets along the way too). Sadly, it becomes apparent that the game wasn't set up as a FFA (attack anywhere), so we need to reset the game. No big deal, but my hand isn't quite as juicy this time. It improves a bit and I have a critical [Mystic Snake](#) to stop the [Patriarch's Bidding](#) by orator when he had 4 [Kokusho, the Evening Star](#) in his graveyard. It quickly becomes apparent that death by Kokusho is quite popular in FFA.



I figure I'm doing pretty well when I rip a **Seedborn Muse** and play it, letting me keep mana up for another **Mystic Snake** as I desperately hope for a third red mana source to get **Kiki-Jiki** going. Those hopes are quickly dashed when **The Depucelater** puts his fiendish **Obliterate** on the stack... with a **March of the Machines** and two **Darksteel Ingots** in play. The best I can do is **Stifle** his **Rukh Egg's** goes to the graveyard trigger so we don't have a 4/4 flier to deal with in addition to the two indestructible 3/3 Ingots.



I actually top deck three lands the next three turns while he takes down **Floral Spuzzam** and a faint glimmer of hope shines—my plan is to drop a **Witness**, get back a land, chump block, play another **Witness**, get back a **Seedborn Muse** and pray to rip one more land so I can play the **Muse** and block one of the **Ingots**, and possibly even get **Kiki-Jiki** going shortly there after. Sadly, my opponent has a **Fire // Ice** for both of my **Witness** chumps and when I try and play my **Seedborn Muse**, he has the **Condescend** for one.

He goes on to win the next round of six too, and was kind enough to share his decklist:

Ultimate March, by The Depucelater (1st place, Extended Free-for-all) 🏆		
60 cards		
14 Island	2 Rukh Egg	3 Condescend
10 Mountain		4 Darksteel Ingot
24 land	2 creatures	3 Echoing Truth

3	Fire/Ice
1	Flamebreak
2	March of the Machines
3	Obliterate
1	Reminisce
3	Seething Song
4	Serum Visions
2	Stifle
3	Telling Time
1	Trade Secrets
1	Words of Wisdom
34 other spells	

The Depucelater:

"The basic idea for the deck is to play **Obliterate** with **March of the Machines** and at least one **Darksteel Ingot** on the board. March/Oblit used to get a bit more play when *Mirrodin* block was in Standard, but I haven't seen it in months so I figured no one would be expecting it. Also, **Obliterate** can't be countered, so people tend to end up pretty frustrated when they've been sitting on a counter hoping to shut down whatever they guess I'm setting up. The first modification I made for the FFA version of this deck was **Stifle** for fear of **Mind's Desire**, **Dragonstorm** and **Kokusho**, which all run rampant in serious FFAs. After a fair amount of testing I was concerned that in response to my **Obliterate** my Ingots might get bounced, so I added **Rukh Egg** as an early game wall and a 4/4 flyer after I wipe the board. The **Echoing Truths** are mainly in there to bounce other players' Ingots before I **Obliterate**. The last odd card is **Trade Secrets** - this card has a lot of potential in FFA because I'll use it to give cards to someone who I either feel poses no threat, or I'll give cards to someone that I may have teamed up with over the course of the game.

"I think next time I may have to run a couple **Time Stops**..."

Momir Magic

[Last week](#) I talked about the participation and prize avatars for this week's [Dissension Release events](#). In the section on Momir Vig (the participation avatar), I incorrectly assumed that the random creatures generated by his ability would be limited by the format in which you were playing. This is incorrect; Momir Vig gives you a random creature from the entire **Magic Online** collection of creatures no matter what format you're running, so apologies for any confusion I may have caused.



I also got a very interesting email from Josh Clark a.k.a. SwingBlade informing me that the Momir Vig Vanguard avatar generated a lot of excitement on the beta server. This is what he said:

"I'm sure you've gotten this email a few times, but the Vig avatar grabs creatures from the total online pool, and is not limited by format. Even in Standard, you can pay 11 and get **Darksteel Colossus** (or **Mycosynth Golem**).

"Momir Magic (also known as Grog's Revenge on the beta boards) is a much-beloved format, likely one of the most played next to drafts on the beta server. It consists of an all-land deck (with variants including all-basics and anything goes lands), plus the Vig avatar.

"A bit of history: the Vig avatar was originally the prize avatar. Lyzolda was going to be given as participation. The beta community rallied together, and came up with some well thought-out arguments for Momir Vig to be the participation avatar. Much to the glee of just about every beta tester, the DIS release events FAQ sheet was published, putting the elf as the participation avatar. There was much jubilation on the boards, and the mead flowed freely.

"I think Vig will very well breathe new life into casual Vanguard. Certainly, with it as the participation avatar, there will be little reason for anyone to miss out. Momir Magic was easily the most-played Constructed format on beta.

"Here are a few quotes from beta participants regarding the Momir Vig avatar:

Harker: "The Avatar is a blast! Major props to who ever came up with it btw. The FFA we had playing with it and 60 card basic lands was the most fun I've had in ages..."

ShatteredDestiny: I do believe Momir would be worth [playing in the release event]... The guy spawns his own format dagnabbit!"

Linkor: "Indeed, Momir Vig is the most revolutionizing avatar made up online... Here we got something which WILL be getting it's own format and probably even special Momir Vig tournaments."

Psottosanti: "Thanks for the praise about Momir Vig...I'm glad you're all enjoying it. I've been talking to the rest of R&D about making him the participation avatar and we're taking all of your comments into account. No promises, but it's looking good."

“Granted, this is a very brief synopsis of the discussion, I think it sums it up well. I'd really like it noted how cooperative and interactive Wizards was in this whole process. Though an employee only posted twice (Jerry and Paul), their interest and effort was made clear. Great is the game where the customer is able to work so closely with the developer, in order to reach an accord.

“Now on to the play aspect of Momir Vig. Vig is a hit-and-miss avatar, that can truly bless you (**Blazing Archon** in FFA rocks), or *truly* screw you over (Phage is a moderate concern, as well as 0-toughness creatures). Timmys will absolutely love it, and even Johnny will have fun combo'ing him. Staple lands for a Vig deck definitely include **Urzatron**, **Ghost Quarter**, **Temple of the False God**, **Deserted Temple**, Mikokoro, Miren, and a few others I can't really think of. Basic lands are necessary, to combat **Ghost Quarter**. Also, artifact lands aren't a terrible idea, because CMC 9 is a good one to fetch from, and the White Bringer can pop those bad boys back.

“I took the liberty of mapping out the # of creatures of each CMC, to help players judge the odds of getting a specific creature (this includes *Dissension*).”

CMC - Number

- 0 - 3
- 1 - 198
- 2 - 387
- 3 - 518
- 4 - 553
- 5 - 345
- 6 - 203
- 7 - 94
- 8 - 42
- 9 - 21
- 10 - 6
- 11 - 3
- 12 - 1
- 15 - 1
- 16 - 1

Thanks, Josh! Momir Magic does sound like a nice change of pace, and it sounds like “Momir Magic” might be something that gains some traction in the casual community, so jump in a league or sealed flight and get the avatar! I ran through a couple solitaire games to see what sort of creatures would pop up:



The initial Torpid Moloch was a little disappointing, though he'd certainly make a great early blocker. Boros Swiftblade and Riptide Crab weren't too shabby, while Captain Sisay wasn't gassy in an all-land deck. Crypt Angel for five mana was okay I suppose. Let's shuffle up and do it again.



Steel Wall, another good blocker. Spectral Lynx made me wish I were running black, and leads me to realize I probably should run an even mix of mana to better try and take advantage of special abilities. Cunning Bandit and Grand Arbiter were rather "eh" but then Phytohydra and Gleancrawler were quite nice! Pus Kami at seven isn't terrible unless you're staring down some black beastie across from you. At eight mana, the Petradon is a game-breaker, since setting your opponent back two lands has got to be huge!

One thing I noticed is that after you drop your sixth mana and discard for Momir's ability, you will generally have an empty hand and can only go for higher cost critters every other turn. I can imagine some tension between just turning each draw into another six mana creature or whether to spend a turn laying a land before you draw another card to pitch for a higher cost creature. Is it worth a turn to ramp up to the next level?

If anyone wants to play a game of Momir Magic with me sometime, just pm me!

Extended 4x Open

START TIME: Saturday May 27, 2006, 9AM PST
102 players

I was interested in seeing how Guildpact may have impacted Extended, and there was a small ripple to be found a little lower in the Top 8 standings. Hoce made use of Godless Shrines to splash Vindicate and possible a few other black cards in his otherwise aggressive Boros Deck Wins deck, but siewca_wiatru went ahead and did what we all thought about doing when we first saw Niv-Mizzet—let's combo him with Curiosity! With Extended being rather fast for a seven mana combo, siewca_wiatru cheated on mana by going the reanimation route, using Careful Study, Thirst for Knowledge and Cephalid Coliseum to get the Dragon into the graveyard, and using Goryo's Vengeance to get him out on the cheap when it was time to enchant him with Curiosity.

The rest of the Top 8 featured the expected heavy-hitters, with orine's CAL build taking the top honors. Terravore gets quite a jump-start in a format chock full of Onslaught fetchlands to search out Ravnica duals. His version had some added spice with Lightning Helix, Firebolts, and Thoughts of Ruin, giving depth outside of the Confinement/Assault/Loam combination. There was also a more standard Boros Deck Wins deck, Tooth and Nail, Zoo, Rock, and Ravager. So where was Friggord? Looking at some of the Morningtides showing up in the sideboards, perhaps it was hated out.

- 1st place, orine (CAL)
- 2nd place, _George_GG_ (Boros Deck Wins)
- 4th place, funkeymonkeyman (Tooth and Nail)
- 4th place, Zom (Zoo)
- 8th place, Hoce (Boros Deck Wins/splash black)
- 8th place, Domasz (Green/black/white Rock)
- 8th place, slearch (Ravager)
- 8th place, siewca_wiatru (Curious Niv-Mizzet)

Boros Deck Wins, by _George_GG_ (2nd place, Extended) Hdec

Main Deck 61 cards		Sideboard
2 Barbarian Ring	4 Firebolt	2 Disenchant
3 Bloodstained Mire	1 Flames of the Blood Hand	1 Flames of the Blood Hand

1 Eiganjo Castle	4 Lava Dart	2 Morningtide
1 Flooded Strand	4 Lightning Helix	2 Mystic Crusader
3 Mountain	2 Molten Rain	2 Pyrite Spellbomb
2 Plains	4 Pillage	1 Pyrostatic Pillar
4 Sacred Foundry	19 other spells	1 Shattering Spree
1 Shinka, the Bloodsoaked Keep		2 Suppression Field
1 Windswept Heath		2 Umezawa's Jitte
4 Wooded Foothills		15 sideboard cards
22 land		
4 Goblin Legionnaire		
3 Grim Lavamancer		
3 Isamaru, Hound of Konda		
2 Kataki, War's Wage		
4 Savannah Lions		
4 Silver Knight		
20 creatures		

_George_GG_:

"So you can see that it is the classic Boros Deck Wins from the past season of Extended with minor changes. I played **Flames of the Blood Hand** instead of **Char**, because the situation at which I want to point a 4 damage spell at a creature instead of player is too rare. In fact, I never want to. The effect of preventing life gain wins games. I played maindeck Kataki because in the 2x tourney before this event there were many Affinity decks and it was likely there would be many in the "main event." The sideboard is oriented to beat mirror matches with **Umezawa's Jitte**, **Pyrite Spellbomb**, and Crusaders. Both decisions were right; in the Swiss I met 2 Boros decks (won both matches) and 2 Affinity decks (I lost one). The **Suppression Fields** and **Pillar** help against Tog matches along with Crusaders, and **Suppression Field** is also useful against Affinity and against decks like Angry Dog, and CAL. The Morningtide is anti-Ichorid and any graveyard-oriented decks. "

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Urza's Mine	2 Talisman of Unity	1 Angel of Despair
4 Urza's Power Plant	4 Sylvan Scrying	1 Boseiju, Who Shelters All
4 Urza's Tower	4 Reap and Sow	1 Duplicant
9 Forest	3 Moment's Peace	1 Forest
1 Boseiju, Who Shelters All	3 Oblivion Stone	1 Leonin Abunas
1 Tranquil Thicket	4 Sensei's Divining Top	1 Mindslaver
23 land	2 Mindslaver	1 Moment's Peace
4 Sakura-Tribe Elder	4 Tooth and Nail	3 Naturalize
2 Eternal Witness	26 other spells	1 Platinum Angel
1 Darksteel Colossus		3 Plow Under
1 Kiki-Jiki, Mirror Breaker		1 Sundering Titan
1 Mephidross Vampire		15 sideboard cards
1 Sundering Titan		
1 Triskelion		
11 creatures		

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
2 Barbarian Ring	4 Call of the Herd	1 Disenchant
2 Bloodstained Mire	4 Char	4 Kataki, War's Wage
1 Forest	4 Firebolt	3 Morningtide
1 Mountain	4 Lightning Helix	2 Naturalize
1 Plains	16 other spells	1 Pitthing Needle
3 Sacred Foundry		4 Umezawa's Jitte
2 Stomping Ground		15 sideboard cards
2 Temple Garden		
4 Windswept Heath		
4 Wooded Foothills		
22 land		
4 Goblin Legionnaire		

4 Grim Lavamancer	
2 Isamaru, Hound of Konda	
4 Kird Ape	
4 Savannah Lions	
4 Watchwolf	
<hr/>	
22 creatures	

Standard w/ Vanguard 4x Open

START TIME: Sunday May 27, 2006, 10AM PST

I sent out some pms for the Top 4 at this tournament to see whether they'd be willing to share their decklists and I got two replies back. Unfortunately, I am unable to do a full recap of the event due to some technical difficulties. Below are two of the decks and the player's thoughts:

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Adarkar Wastes	4 Compulsive Research	4 Annex
2 Boros Garrison	3 Faith's Fetters	4 Jushi Apprentice
6 Island	4 Hinder	4 Pyroclasm
1 Oboro, Palace in the Clouds	4 Lightning Helix	3 Stone Rain
5 Plains	4 Mana Leak	<hr/>
2 Sacred Foundry	2 Remand	15 sideboard cards
4 Steam Vents	2 Rewind	
<hr/>	4 Wrath of God	
24 land	2 Zur's Weirding	
4 Firemane Angel	<hr/>	
1 Keiga, the Tide Star	29 other spells	
1 Meloku the Clouded Mirror		
1 Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind		
<hr/>		
7 creatures		

islands are rad:

"I noticed there would be a Standard Vanguard 4x a day or so before and pondered what deck to play. I checked the 2x earlier that day, and saw a lot of Red/Green and Zoo with Akroma. I then talked to some people in my clan about the format, and some pro friends, namely magicalmarty and SmokesMcCloaks (the 4x Tribal winner). We all agreed the Kamiel Angel deck from Honolulu would wreck all the Zoo/Gruul decks, especially since you could get Angels into the 'yard so quickly with the Prodigal Sorcerer avatar. The only problem with the deck is in control matchups, where you just have dead cards like Fetters, Helix, and Wrath; I also went ahead and cut Gifts, making the matchup worse. I was especially worried about the Blue/Red Tron decks, and dedicated most of my sideboard slots to it, eventually cutting **Descendant of Kiyomaro** for **Annex** and **Stone Rain**.

"If I were to play the deck again I would add Signets, and probably sideboard **Descendant of Kiyomaro**, since Akroma protects against **Pyroclasm** too easily. The biggest thing I am happy I changed from Kamiel's Honolulu list was cutting the **Gifts Ungiven**, because they are totally unnecessary in this Vanguard build."

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
7 Forest	3 Char	3 Blood Moon
4 Karplusan Forest	4 Flames of the Blood Hand	3 Naturalize
7 Mountain	3 Moldervine Cloak	3 Pithing Needle
1 Skarrg, the Rage Pits	<hr/>	3 Pyroclasm
4 Stomping Ground	10 other spells	3 Umezawa's Jitte
<hr/>		<hr/>
23 land		15 sideboard cards
4 Burning-Tree Shaman		
4 Dryad Sophisticate		
4 Giant Solifuge		

4	Kird Ape
4	Scab-Clan Mauler
3	Scorched Rusalka
4	Skarrgan Pit-Skulk
27 creatures	

patariba:

"This deck is very fast and has advantage against Avatars with average or low starting life. However, Akroma avatar Beatdown decks are the greatest enemy for this deck -- protection red and starting at 27 life!"

*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**. 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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