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Deck Doctor: Izzet Pinball (Part 2 of 2)

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Building on a Budget
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Welcome back to Building on a Budget, Deck Doctor edition! [Last week](#), I took Yesterdays Fate's U/R Pinball decklist and turned it from this:

Pinball v1.0 dec

Main Deck
80 cards

14 Island 3 Izzet Boilerworks 9 Mountain <hr/> 26 lands	3 Dwarven Patrol 4 Gelectrode 2 Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind 3 Razorfin Hunter <hr/> 12 creatures	3 Compulsive Research 2 Curiosity 4 Dream's Grip 1 Ensnaring Bridge 2 Kraken's Eye 2 Memory Lapse 2 Obsessive Search 4 Opt 3 Psionic Gift 3 Quicksilver Dagger 2 Remand 2 Reminisce 2 Rewind 2 Rites of Refusal 4 Toils of Night and Day 1 Trade Routes 3 Twiddle <hr/> 42 other spells
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into this

Pinball v3.0 dec

Main Deck
60 cards

13 Island 3 Izzet Boilerworks 8 Mountain <hr/> 24 lands	3 Dwarven Patrol 4 Gelectrode 2 Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind 3 Razorfin Hunter <hr/> 12 creatures	3 Compulsive Research 4 Curiosity 4 Dream's Grip 3 Opt 3 Quicksilver Dagger 2 Remand 1 Reminisce 4 Twiddle <hr/> 24 other spells
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Before I continue along with the deck doctorin', I'd like to address a couple of concerns I've had from readers regarding last week's columns.

Question: Is this deck budget?

Answer: Absolutely! Remember, all prices are based on the going rates using *Magic Online*. Island, Izzet Boilerworks, Mountain, Gelectrode, Dwarven Patrol, Compulsive Research, Dream's Grip, Quicksilver Dagger, Reminisce and Twiddle can all be had for a song and a dance. Remand can be found at half a ticket each. Curiosity can be found at half a ticket each. Opt can be found at two for a ticket as well.

Niv-Mizzet is the sole rare in the deck. I checked the trading message boards, and found dozens of Niv-Mizzet at three to four tickets each. The total cost on this deck? Eleven tickets! As a spoiler, I go up to four Niv-Mizzet (still the only rare in the deck) by the last build of Pinball. The cost of that version of the deck tops out at seventeen tickets – still well within my thirty ticket budget constraint.



Update on Rain Delay



Question: Enough with Extended! Can we get back to Standard?

Answer: The Magic 8-ball says definitely so. It's been a fun jaunt into Extendedland, but I'll be heading back to Standardnation again next week.

Game #1: HanG21 (R/W Aggro)

Han gets down **Slith Firewalkers** on turns 2 and 3, and I am without any **Twiddles** or **Dream's Grip**. A Jitte on the fourth turn ensures a losing board position, as my pingers suddenly become ineffective, and I don't have a way to keep Niv-Mizzet on the board long enough to combo HanG21 out.

0-1

Although it's sometimes frustrating to lose to Jitte, my deck definitely had ways to come back from this game. If I had drawn any **Twiddle/Dream's Grip**, I could have kept his **Slith Firewalkers** tapped down long enough to get **Gelectrode** onto the board, and then used **Gelectrode** to shoot his Firewalkers multiple times. Unfortunately, I kept a hand with multiple pingers and few fast effects, so I got outraced this time.

Game #2: Omchizen (Enchantress)

Omchizen drops a quick **Enchantress's Presence**, followed with **Heartbeat of Spring** and **Loxodon Warhammer**. I draw double **Gelectrode**, and kill every creature I see, untapping the **Gelectrodes** multiple times with **Twiddle** and **Dream's Grip**. With two **Gelectrodes** on the board, one **Twiddle** equals five points of damage (the initial two shots, plus the two untap triggers from playing an instant, plus the untap from **Twiddle** itself). Omchizen is unable to get an offense going, and I get Niv-Mizzet enchanted with **Curiosity** for the instant win.

1-1

One reader asked if it would be better to run **Shock** in this deck, rather than **Twiddle/Dream's Grip**. **Shock** is decent, but **Twiddle** has more uses in this particular deck, plus **Twiddle** fits this deck's theme better. **Twiddle** allows me to draw extra cards when I have a pinger enchanted with **Curiosity**. **Dream's Grip** lets me tap down my opponent's land at the end of turn, which can spell the difference between getting Niv-Mizzet on the board past countermagic, and losing a game. **Shock** is definitely a solid spell, but it doesn't combo with **Curiosity** and **Quicksilver Dagger** as well as **Twiddle**.



Game #3: Death Jezzter (Mono Green)

Death Jezzter has a 130 card deck, and has troubles drawing enough mana to play a fair match. I get a **Dwarven Patrol**, enchant it with two **Quicksilver Daggers**, untap it multiple times with blue spells, and draw into the Niv-Mizzet/**Curiosity** combo for the win.

2-1

Game #4: CyKnide (Cloudstone Curio)

Here's how this game went, on his side of the board.

Turn 1: **Windswept Heath**, **Breeding Pool**.

Turn 2: **Temple Garden**.

Turn 3: **Windswept Heath #2**, **Foil Hallowed Fountain**, **Cloudstone Curio**.

Turn 4: **Temple Garden #2**, **Loxodon Hierarch**.

Turn 5: **Temple Garden #3**, cast **Mystic Snake** in response to my **Gelectrode**, bouncing his **Loxodon Hierarch**.

Unfortunately, my slow draw couldn't compete with his 88 tickets worth of cards this game, and I lost. This was definitely a winnable match, I just kept a hand that didn't have enough action again. Since this happened two games in a row, I made a note to myself that I need more Shazam! in the early game.

2-2

Game #5: Penguinhj (B/R Beatdown)

He gets **Stinkweed Imp**, and I match it with **Gelectrode**. He casts **Cruel Edict**, kills my only creature, and then uses **Reckless Charge** to turn his Imp into a 4/3 beater. I dig further into my deck with **Compulsive Research**, and he answers with **Barbarian Bully**. **Dwarven Patrol** comes down to make sure the Bully doesn't take all my lunch money, and **Twiddle** deals with the flashbacked **Reckless Charge** on the Imp. Niv-Mizzet hits on turn 6, lives through the turn, and then wears the **Curiosity** cap. Twenty cards and damage later, the curiously strong Niv-Mizzet wins the game.

3-2



Although a main focus of the deck were the **Dwarven Patrols**, I found that they weren't really working out all that well in this deck. They don't untap from multi-colored Red spells, meaning that **Gelectrode**, Niv-Mizzet,

Quicksilver Dagger, and Razorfin Hunter left the Patrol tapped. Without Quicksilver Dagger, Dwarven Patrol was just a 4/2 dork with a major drawback.

I also wanted to get the deck up to four Niv-Mizzet, since Niv-Mizzet was doing a majority of the killing in my endgames. If it's the #1 killer in my deck, I want to have the best chance I could of drawing the big ol' lizard every game. Last, I wanted to speed the deck up a little, so I brought my Razorfin Hunter count up to four, added in a couple of Remands, and took out the Opts. The Opts were great with Dwarven Patrol, but sans Patrol they were just another cantrip. Since I didn't want to be left with one Opt, I took it out in favor of another Compulsive Research.

In: 1 Compulsive Research, 2 Niv-Mizzet, 1 Razorfin Hunter, 2 Remand
Out: 3 Dwarven Patrol, 3 Opt,

Pinball v4.0			Main Deck 60 cards	
13 Island	4 Gelectrode	4 Compulsive Research		
3 Izzet Boilerworks	4 Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind	4 Curiosity		
8 Mountain	4 Razorfin Hunter	4 Dream's Grip		
24 lands	12 creatures	3 Quicksilver Dagger		
		4 Remand		
		1 Reminisce		
		4 Twiddle		
		24 other spells		

Game #6: Scorpio Draconis (R/U Shattering Spree/Lattice)

[This deck looks familiar!](#) Scorpio Draconis added Djinn Illuminatus to the deck, and uses the Djinn to replicate Lava Spike seven times, the turn after he Spree's away all of my permanents. I came one turn away from comboing him out with Niv-Mizzet/Curiosity, but was one tap-effect short of denying him the Lattice mana via Twiddles and Dream's Grip.

3-3

Game #7: Red Rain (U/G/W Crystal Shard/Sunken Hope)

I get down Gelectrode, and Red Rain drops Crystal Shard. I happily plunk down Curiosity on the Gelectrode, and proceed to draw six extra cards over two turns off of the slap-happy timster thanks to Twiddle and Dream's Grip. Red Rain gigs my Gelectrode with Duplicant, and then returns his Duplicant with his Shard.

I bait a pair of Absorbs with Compulsive Researchs, and then drop Niv-Mizzet. He casts Duplicant, killing my Dragon Legend – but this is according to my plan! I drop a second Niv-Mizzet, enchant it with Curiosity, and then cast Dream's Grip on an Izzet Boilerworks to get exactly enough mana to cast Compulsive Research for the win.

4-3

Right about here is where part one of Pinball went live on [magicthegathering.com](#). I received quite a few suggestions for the deck, and made a few changes to the deck based on reader feedback.

1. I traded Reminisce for Mnemonic Nexus. The one mana difference between the two is negligible, since the purpose of reshuffling my graveyard into my library is to give Niv-Mizzet/Curiosity more fuel should my opponent have more life than I have cards. Being able to restock my library mid-Curiosity is key.
2. I was short a little on offense, and more than a few people suggested adding Thieving Magpie to the deck. Thieving Magpie draws cards whenever it damages the opponent, so if it is enchanted by Quicksilver Dagger, I'd draw two cards per shooting. Without any enchantments, Thieving Magpie still swings for a card a turn.
3. Although I didn't want to run Shock in the deck, Lava Dart was another story. Lava Dart flashes back for no mana (only the sacrifice of a Mountain), making it the perfect direct-damage compliment to Gelectrode. Twiddle allows Gelectrode to shoot twice – Lava Dart does the same for the cost of ⚡, sacrifice a Mountain.



In order to make room for the reader suggestions, some cards need to go. Reminisce obviously gets cut, since it is swapping one-for-one for the more desirable Mnemonic Nexus. Compulsive Research has always been a thrown-in for the deck, and Thieving Magpie also allows me access to card-drawing, so they can swap as well. Last of all, I have had games where I get all Twiddle and no action. Eight Twiddle effects are too many, so I can afford to give up a couple of those in favor of Lava Darts – especially since both are designed mainly to play teammate to Gelectrode.

In: Mnemonic Nexus, 3 Thieving Magpie, 3 Lava Dart
Out: Reminisce, 4 Compulsive Research, 2 Twiddle

Pinball v5.0			Main Deck 60 cards	
13 Island	4 Gelectrode	4 Curiosity		
3 Izzet Boilerworks	4 Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind	4 Dream's Grip		
8 Mountain	4 Razorfin Hunter	3 Lava Dart		
24 lands	3 Thieving Magpie	1 Mnemonic Nexus		
	15 creatures	3 Quicksilver Dagger		
		4 Remand		
		2 Twiddle		
		21 other spells		

Game #8: Goblin361 (B/G)

I get turn 3 **Gelectrode** and turn 4 **Curiosity**. I shoot for six cards over two turns with untap spells, until the **Curiosity** gets taken out by **Sundering Vitae**. **Thieving Magpie** joins the party, and draws into **Quicksilver Dagger**. The **Dagger** gets hit with **Naturalize**, but this leaves **Goblin361** open for another **Curiosity** on the **Gelectrode**. Multiple **Twiddle** and **Lava Darts** later, the game is over.

5-3

The great thing about **Curiosity/Quicksilver Dagger** on **Gelectrode** is that it enables me to draw into more ways to untap **Gelectrode**. **Twiddle**, **Dream's Grip** and **Lava Dart** all cost only one (or zero) mana to cast. If I have six mana available on a turn, I can do close to a full twenty damage: Shoot with **Gelectrode** (1), untap six times with three **Twiddle/Dream's Grip** (7), cast **Lava Dart** three times (13, three from the darts, and three from **Gelectrode**), and flash back **Lava Dart** three times (19). With one **Curiosity**, I'd draw thirteen extra cards during that turn. With two, I'd draw twenty-six.



Game #9: DragonNW (Wake)

DragonNW opens the game with **Darksteel Pendant** and **Worship**, but I drop three early pingers, and sit behind two **Remands**. He eventually taps five mana to cast **Mirari's Wake**, which earns a **Remand**. I cast **Twiddle** to tap his last land, and then drop **Niv-Mizzet/Curiosity** for the win.

6-3

Please note that putting **Curiosity** on **Niv-Mizzet** is not an instant win – I still need to draw a card to get the **Niv-Mizzet/Curiosity** loop going. In the above game, one of my **Razorfin Hunters** was enchanted by another **Curiosity** – so since I dropped **Niv-Mizzet/Curiosity**, I shot my opponent with the **Hunter** to get the combo online.

Game #10: Bkrieg73 (Power Conduit)

The only card I see is **Power Conduit**, as **Bkrieg73** is stuck at three mana. I get my combo and win on turn 7.

7-3

Game #11: Bkrieg73 (The Rematch!)

Bkrieg73 isn't happy with the last game (understandably so!) and asks for a rematch, which I am more than happy to oblige. **Bkrieg73** gets a lot of mana acceleration on the board, including multiple **Pentad Prisms**. I get down three **Tims**, and shoot him down from twenty to zero. After the game, he shows me that his win mechanism was **Lunar Avenger** plus **Doubling Season**. If he had drawn an **Avenger**, I would have had trouble this match – but since he did not, I had no problems winning.

8-3

Game #12: Bolamagic (B/G)

Bolamagic opens with **Nezumi Graverobber**, which tastes both **Lava Dart** and graveyard in one fell swoop. My **Razorfin Hunter** gets his spirit consumed by **Consume Spirit**, and we trade putting **Gelectrode** and **Stinkweed Imp** on the board. Two turns of swapping a point a turn later, I draw and play **Curiosity**, and shoot him for half-a-dozen plus cards with **Gelectrode** and untap effects.

Bolamagic doesn't like this turn of events, and casts **Chainer's Edict** to kill **Gelectrode**. I drop **Niv-Mizzet**, and it gets **Edicted** as well. I follow up the next turn with a second **Razorfin Hunter** and a second **Niv-Mizzet**, and **Bolamagic's** answer is a second **Stinkweed Imp**. I shoot one **Imp** with **Niv-Mizzet** thanks to my normal draw, and kill it with the **Hunter**. I do the same again next turn, and beat him to death with **Niv-Mizzet** in the red zone – a first for this deck!

Time for one last change to the deck. Although one of the reasons I ran **Twiddle/Dream's Grip** in this deck was to untap **Izzet Boilerworks** in a pinch, I found that the Boilerworks just weren't working out as planned. I almost never wanted to play a land tapped, since the deck could maximize use of mana each turn. In addition, I was finding myself short on early Red mana that didn't come into play tapped, and **Lava Dart** needs Mountains to come back from the graveyard. The mana needs of the deck had evolved from the beginning builds, and so the mana base of the deck needs to evolve as well.

In: 3 Mountain

Out: 3 **Izzet Boilerworks**

Pinball v6.0			Main Deck 60 cards	
13 Island	4 Gelectrode	4 Curiosity		
11 Mountain	4 Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind	4 Dream's Grip		
24 lands	4 Razorfin Hunter	3 Lava Dart		
	3 Thieving Magpie	1 Mnemonic Nexus		
	15 creatures	3 Quicksilver Dagger		
		4 Remand		
		2 Twiddle		
		21 other spells		

Game #13: Last Tragic Hero (Draw-Go)

Last Tragic Hero gets down **Isochron Scepter** with **Fire // Ice**, proceeds to draw a half-dozen cards with **Ice**, **Boomerangs** a bunch of my lands, drops and flips Erayo, and then beats me to death with a second Erayo, **Sword of Light and Shadow**, and multiple **Stalking Stones**. Due to mana denial and the **Fire // Ice** on the Scepter, I was never really in this game at all. Maybe the deck could use a bounce spell or two, for board positions such as these?

9-4

Game #14: JJJim007 (G/R Gruul)

For today's final match, I'll leave you with a full accounting of the game. This will show just how explosive a deck Pinball has evolved into over the past two weeks! Good job and thanks again to Yesterdays Fate for the concept.

Opening Hand: Island, Island, Mountain, **Gelectrode**, **Curiosity**, **Remand**, **Remand**

My turn 1: Island

His turn 1: Forest

My turn 2: Draw (**Razorfin Hunter**). Play Mountain, **Razorfin Hunter**.

His turn 2: Play Mountain, **Tin Street Hooligan**.

My turn 3: Draw (**Quicksilver Dagger**). Shoot **Tin Street Hooligan** with Hunter. Play Mountain, **Gelectrode**

His turn 3: Play Forest, **Trophy Hunter**.

My turn 4: Draw (Mountain). Play **Curiosity** on **Gelectrode**, shoot JJJim007 (20-19). Draw (**Lava Dart**). Play Mountain.

His turn 4: Mountain, attempt to cast **Blanchwood Armor** on **Trophy Hunter** (I shoot it with **Razorfin Hunter**, then **Lava Dart** it, then shoot it with **Gelectrode**).

My turn 5: Draw (**Razorfin Hunter**). Shoot with **Gelectrode** (20-18). Draw (Mountain). Play Mountain.

His turn 5: Play **Burning-Tree Bloodscale**. I shoot JJJim007 with **Razorfin Hunter** at end of turn. (20-17).

My turn 6: Draw (**Curiosity**). Put **Curiosity #2** on **Gelectrode**. Shoot JJJim007 (20-16). Draw (**Lava Dart**, **Gelectrode**).

His turn 6: Attempt to cast **Moldervine Cloak** on **Burning-Tree Bloodscale**. I shoot it with **Razorfin Hunter**, and flash back **Lava Dart** to kill it. At end of turn, I shoot JJJim007 with **Gelectrode** (20-15). Draw (Mountain, **Razorfin Hunter**).

My turn 7: Draw (Island). Play Island. Play **Razorfin Hunter**.

His Turn 7: Play **Streetbreaker Wurm**. At end of turn, I shoot JJJim007 with **Razorfin Hunter** (20-14). I shoot JJJim007 with **Gelectrode** (20-13). Draw (**Lava Dart**, Mountain). Cast **Lava Dart** on JJJim007 (20-12). Shoot JJJim007 with **Gelectrode** again (20-11). Draw (**Dream's Grip**, Mountain). Cast **Lava Dart** on JJJim007 (20-10). Shoot JJJim007 with **Gelectrode** a third time (20-9). Draw (Island, Island). Cast **Dream's Grip** on **Gelectrode**. Shoot JJJim007 with **Gelectrode** with **Dream's Grip** on the stack. (20-8). Draw (**Quicksilver Dagger**, **Thieving Magpie**). Shoot with JJJim007 with **Gelectrode** for a fifth time (20-7). Draw (Island, **Twiddle**).



My turn 8: Draw (Niv-Mizzet). Play Island. Shoot JJJim007 with [Razorfin Hunter](#) (20-6). Shoot JJJim007 with [Razorfin Hunter](#) (20-5). Shoot JJJim007 with [Gelectrode](#) (20-4). Draw (Island, [Quicksilver Dagger](#)). Flashback [Lava Dart](#) at JJJim007 (20-3). Shoot JJJim007 with [Gelectrode](#) (20-2). Draw (Island, Island). Flashback [Lava Dart](#) at JJJim007 again (20-1). Shoot with [Gelectrode](#) for the win.

10-4

Until next week, this is the Deck Doctor signing off!

*Ben Bleiweiss has written about his obsession with **Magic: The Gathering** for over a decade. He's travelled the world because of **Magic**, both as a player and a writer. When not spending time playing **Magic**, writing about **Magic**, or thinking about **Magic**, Ben is employed by [StarCityGames.com](#), where he works with **Magic** cards all day long. He lives with his wife in Virginia, and they sleep comfortably at night under their Orgg down comforter.*



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