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# Big Hulk, Big Problem

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Welcome to another installment of Limited Information. *Time Spiral* speculation seems to be all the rage this week. I hear it's a very fun set, but right now we have current stuff to worry about. *Coldsnap* draft seems to have a lot of people befuddled, and with good reason. This environment has depth, with a lot of borderline decisions. It's a tough set, and that more than makes it worth further exploration. This week, our exploration will take us through a *Coldsnap* walkthrough.

## Pack 1

**Pack 1, Pick 1:** *Martyr of Ashes*, *Martyr of Bones*, *Thermal Flux*, *Sun's Bounty*, *Thermopod*, *Orcish Bloodpainter*, *Snow-Covered Plains*, *Sound the Call*, *Surging Sentinels*, *Frost Raptor*, *Disciple of Tevesh Szat*, *Arctic Flats*, *Krovikan Rot*, *Perilous Research*, *Garza's Assassin*

### My pick:

What I don't like is a pack consisting of only Black cards as genuine options. This guarantees me and the people after a Black pick. There might be a *Frost Raptor* or *Plains* in there somewhere, but this looks like B/X down the line. What I do like is having available one of the format's best cards. *Garza's Assassin* is simply incredible as a walking, talking *Seal of Doom* that eliminates a high percentage of genuinely threatening guys. Add in a very payable recover cost, and excellent synergy with *Grim Harvest*, and you have one of the best rares of the set for Limited play. The signal part is unfortunate, but not so much that it would cause me to send along a primo bomb along to the next lucky soul.

**My pick:** *Garza's Assassin*

**Pack 1, Pick 2:** *Chilling Shade*, *Boreal Centaur*, *Snow-Covered Swamp*, *Kjeldoran Javelineer*, *Surging Dementia*, *Survivor of the Unseen*, *Ronom Unicorn*, *Aurochs Herd*, *Skred*, *Krovikan Scoundrel*, *Karplusan Strider*, *Wilderness Elemental*, *Phyrexian Ironfoot*, *Heidar*, *Rimewind Master*

### My pick:

This overpowered pack was one of the more defining of the draft. Heidar (hi there!) is a great rare to pick up, although he does bring along some baggage. If he's up and running, he looks amazing. You can save your guys or stop their development at a very reasonable price with a nice body to match. That's a big "if" though; taking him here means not only going into a second color, but going into a specific archetype as well. B/U Snow is certainly fine to draft, but there are other options.

*Skred* and *Aurochs Herd* are, or are very close to, their colors' best commons. I'm not saying they're better than the rare, but if you want a reason to go into either Red or Green, these cards are good ones. I'd say that's more of a personal preference than any great power disparity. Personally I like and respect the snow archetypes, so the subjectivity argument doesn't hold true in this case. But if we are interested in going snow, we have to accept we're passing two strong snow cards as well, in this case *Snow-Covered Swamp* and *Phyrexian Ironfoot*. The Ironfoot in particular is excellent. It's fine early as a defense when setting up, yet its stats remain relevant even into the late stages. If you're interested in snow, it's the right pick, right after Heidar.

The question to us is what the person on our left will do. If, by their first two picks, they're dedicated to snow, we could be in trouble on the way back. That's not a deal breaker, but taking the dregs for a full third of a draft is not fun either. I think it's safe to say that the player on our right, by passing Heidar, is conceding the snow archetype. We can take either the Green or Red card and do the same. That's especially true of Green as that's the color least involved in snow decks. I don't like this plan, simply because it's contingent on the player on our left acting in a certain way. We don't know if he'll go snow or not; in fact his choice may already be decided by the third pick.



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If we took Herd here, for example, it still doesn't lock the player in our left into snow. If he took **Stalking Yeti** and **Krovikan Rot** as his first two cards, then he'll probably take the **Skred** over the Heidar. Now you've taken a worse card for no appreciable gain. You can make yourself crazy with all these levels of "if, then" analysis, simply because there are so many unknowns. It's not worth it. Save yourself the headache and take the best card in the pack, if that card fits your previous picks. In this case, Heidar does.

**My pick:** Heidar, Rimewind Master

**Pack 1, Pick 3:** Snow-Covered Island, Gelid Shackles, Ohran Yeti, Frozen Solid, Chill to the Bone, Karplusan Wolverine, Feast of Flesh, Krovikan Mist, Kjeldoran War Cry, Bull Aurochs, Highland Weald, Jotun Grunt, Rimewind Cryomancer

[My pick:](#)

Assuming we want to play both of our first picks, and in this case we should try, then it's time to start turning them on. In Heidar's case, that means snow themes. I want a deck that has at least four snow permanents in play when he's cast, which shouldn't be a real problem at the five mana mark. However we're also going to take **Rimewind Taskmages** highly, which needs snow much sooner to optimize. The best way to help both is with snow lands, so we may as well get started. All those Black and Blue cards in the pack are fine, they're just not as good as active Rimewind dudes (plus whatever else we add that requires  along the way).

**My pick:** Snow-Covered Island

**Pack 1, Pick 4:** Krovikan Scoundrel, Survivor of the Unseen, Squall Drifter, Thermopod, Into the North, Orcish Bloodpainter, Snow-Covered Plains, Surging Sentinels, Frost Raptor, Frost Marsh, Gristle Grinner, Zur the Enchanter

[My pick:](#)

You could make an argument for **Frost Raptor** here, because it's very good. However, I can't pass up an on-color snow dual land. At the very least for **Garza's Assassin**, this deck may have heavy color requirements. If we're going to be playing off-color snow lands, then these duals become especially helpful. In a deck like this is shaping up to be, win conditions aren't on my radar this early.

**My pick:** Frost Marsh

**Pack 1, Pick 5:** Snow-Covered Island, Gelid Shackles, Ohran Yeti, Frozen Solid, Aurochs Herd, Karplusan Wolverine, Surging Dementia, Thermal Flux, Ronom Unicorn, Rimehorn Aurochs, Karplusan Minotaur

Those are some fine lookin' Aurochs in that pack. Someone's gonna have good eating tonight! As for us we'll be dining on snow cones, holding the cone of course.

**My pick:** Snow-Covered Island

**Pack 1, Pick 6:** Goblin Rimerunner, Gelid Shackles, Frost Raptor, Snow-Covered Forest, Icefall, Grim Harvest, Swift Maneuver, Martyr of Spores, Aurochs Herd, Mystic Melting

[My pick:](#)

Nice Herd #3 for whomever. I see very little Black, which is sad but acceptable. It's not yet time for the **Grim Harvest**. Despite it being excellent with **Garza's**, it's a card I want exactly one of in most of my decks. Besides, there are more powerful options available.

We don't need to take the Snow-Covered Forest at this point, as we're alright on snow lands, and off-color ones are worth less than on's in general. What we *can* do is start looking for useful creatures. Rimerunner is a fine card in snow decks, but it's not so powerful that we should take it and sacrifice Black and the Assassin. **Frost Raptor** fits our current needs nicely, as well as solidifying our lock on Blue. There's no reason not to take it here.

**My pick:** Frost Raptor

**Pack 1, Pick 7:** Krovikan Scoundrel, Rune Snag, Martyr of Sands, Bull Aurochs, Icefall, Snow-Covered Mountain, Chilling Shade, Steam Spitter, Luminesce

[My pick:](#)

This pack had three very different but viable options. The Snow-Covered Mountain is always an option, although again, there's a limit to the number of off-color lands you can include in a deck like this. **Chilling Shade** is another snow permanent that counts as a win condition. Like **Grim Harvest** though, I'd want at most exactly one in a deck. They're mana intensive, and often require annoying decisions. "Do another point or keep up regeneration mana for **Rimebound Dead**?" Snow mana is always at a premium, and damage is its least impressive outlet. Most players do know this, which is why you see **Chilling Shades** very late. So we can pass it around for now, fairly confident in grabbing one when we actually want it.

That leaves **Rune Snag**. My estimation of this little instant has gone up considerably in the weeks since **Coldsnap's** release. It's often fine tempo, but more importantly, it's one of the cheapest spells with impact in a U/B deck. Between Heidar and hopefully **Garza's Assassin**, our late game looks pretty solid. A card that helps us to that state, and that doesn't need snow mana to operate, has a lot of appeal. Mana curves are so tight that the singleton Snag can still counter something, although you'd hope for a couple more. Weighing its quality versus the other cards, and the likelihood of seeing it versus the other cards, I went with **Rune Snag**, reasonably confident it was the right pick.

**My pick:** Rune Snag

**Pack 1, Pick 8:** Rite of Flame, Grim Harvest, Martyr of Frost, Frostweb Spider, Ohran Yeti, Kjeldoran Outrider, Chilling Shade, Counterbalance

Two cards in color that you want only one of in a deck. I still say **Chilling Shade** is more likely to come late. More importantly, I'd rather have a **Grim Harvest** than a **Chilling Shade** in a deck. Adding that up, the decision is easy.

**My pick:** Grim Harvest

**Pack 1, Pick 9:** Martyr of Bones, Thermal Flux, Sun's Bounty, Thermopod, Orcish Bloodpainter, Snow-Covered Plains, Perilous Research

A surprisingly tough pick. **Perilous Research** is awfully good in a format with such little card draw and high land counts. It's also an easy Recover trigger, and even gets card advantage against popular cards like **Gelid Shackles**. It went to the wire, but I had to go with the snow land here. I couldn't promise **Perilous Research** making the final deck, while I knew the Plains would. A core-theme enabler just looks better than peripheral support.

**My pick:** Snow-Covered Plains

**Pack 1, Pick 10:** Chilling Shade, Kjeldoran Javelineer, Surging Dementia, Survivor of the Unseen, Krovikan Scoundrel, Wilderness Elemental

You could make an argument for Survivor or **Chilling Shade** here. I still prefer only one of the mana-intensives in my decks. Since Blue seems far more open, I went with the card that has a (slightly) less chance of appearing again.

**My pick:** Chilling Shade

**Pack 1, Pick 11:** Gelid Shackles, Karplusan Wolverine, Bull Aurochs, Jotun Grunt, Rimewind Cryomancer

This pick was probably a mistake, although it's a close thing. I went with the Cryomancer over **Gelid Shackles**, on the assumption I was entrenched in U/B. That's a bit too committal, and if the deck ended up U/W or even B/U/W, the Shackles would be a better pick. This is all with the benefit of hindsight of course.

**My pick:** Rimewind Cryomancer

**Pack 1, Pick 12:** Krovikan Scoundrel, Survivor of the Unseen, Snow-Covered Plains, Gristle Grinner

**Gristle Grinner** is a nice creature, but it's not snow and it's not really necessary for the deck to function. That potentially 11th pick **Survivor of the Unseen** means they should continue to go late. Passing one at this point will hardly push anyone into Blue. Thus we take another snow land; potentially more on-color than the Snow-Covered Forests or Mountains we passed from before.

**My pick:** Snow-Covered Plains

**Pack 1, Pick 13:** Karplusan Wolverine, Surging Dementia, Thermal Flux

This is a straight up hate draft. Taking one of these now almost guarantees no one will be playing heavy **Surging Dementia**, not that it's particularly likely anyway. Still, removing that possibility is more appealing than a middling slowtrip pick.

**My pick:** Surging Dementia

**Pack 1, Pick 14:** Icefall, Mystic Melting

A slight sideboard option, and we'll play nice with our neighbor, who's probably Red by this point.

**My pick:** Mystic Melting

**Pack 1, Pick 15:** Luminesce

**My pick:** Luminesce

Deck analysis so far: We have two bomby rares, while a full third of our picks have been devoted to snow lands. I'm more than ok with those statistics, but we should be on the lookout for more snow-appreciators. At this rate, and the way the table seems to regard snow lands, we should be fine in that category. Now we can get a bit more aggressive in taking cards that have intrinsic board impact. Snow-lands will still get serious consideration, but if the packs continue along this pace, the final count shouldn't be problematic.

## Pack 2

**Pack 2, Pick 1:** Snow-Covered Swamp, Drelnoch, Surging Sentinels, Boreal Druid, Disciple of Tevesh Szat, Martyr of Ashes, Surging Dementia, Survivor of the Unseen, Ronom Unicorn, Aurochs Herd, Skred, Rimewind Cryomancer, Deathmark, Magmatic Core, Thrumming Stone

**My pick:**

We're a little past the **Skred/Aurochs Herd** debate, although either one will be find a happy home in someone's deck. For us, our choices come to a Black decision: **Deathmark**, **Snow-Covered Swamp**, or **Disciple of Tevesh Szat**. From the analysis above, I think we can disregard the Swamp for now. The decision between **Deathmark** and the Disciple is pretty close though. **Deathmark**, targeting restrictive or not, is highly efficient and useful as what it does. Disciple is a bit lower on inherent power level, although only a bit, but it has the added benefit of comboing with other cards very well. Sometimes that means another Disciple or **Grim Harvest**. In this particular deck, I'm thinking **Rimewind Taskmage**. The untap ability changes Disciple from a combat trick to a sniper rifle. Do we have any Taskmages at this point? Nope, but from the signals we've been sending, there's no reason to assume that will remain true. The final point in favor of the Disciple over the **Deathmark** is that we definitely don't care if **Deathmark** is played against us. The same can't be said of the Disciple.

**My pick:** **Disciple of Tevesh Szat**

**Pack 2, Pick 2:** **Martyr of Spores**, **Karplusan Wolverine**, **Feast of Flesh**, **Krovikan Mist**, **Kjeldoran War Cry**, **Bull Aurochs**, **Snow-Covered Island**, **Surging Might**, **Boreal Griffin**, **Surging Aether**, **Zombie Musher**, **Arctic Nishoba**, **Luminesce**, **Thrumming Stone**

[My pick:](#)

It's a bit late in the game to start looking at **Krovikan Mist** or **Feast of Flesh**. Besides, we have two fine picks in either **Snow-Covered Island** or **Zombie Musher**. The Island's benefits are the same as always, while Musher deserves analysis. Here it is: **Zombie Musher** is awesome. It helps our theme, punishes the mirror, and blocks well against any deck that's not snow-crazy. It has genuine influence at any stage of the game, and its probably Black's best common. It's good enough for me.

**My pick:** **Zombie Musher**

**Pack 2, Pick 3:** **Snow-Covered Swamp**, **Drelnoch**, **Surging Sentinels**, **Boreal Druid**, **Disciple of Tevesh Szat**, **Into the North**, **Icefall**, **Krovikan Scoundrel**, **Survivor of the Unseen**, **Martyr of Sands**, **Thermopod**, **Greater Stone Spirit**, **Vanish into Memory**

[My pick:](#)

This pick looks almost exactly the same as p2p1, so why did I take the Swamp this time instead of the second Disciple? There were two reasons. The first is that we just added two four-mana cards to the deck. With Black being dry coming from the current direction, these kinds of cards aren't likely to stop. Second, we just passed two of our own-colored snow lands to the right. We don't really care about sending Forests or Plains down the line, in the sense that they won't change people's colors. But throwing down stuff that we value highly could send a false signal that Blue or Black snow is open, as opposed to just Blue or Black. This would be a bad thing come pack three. Either one of these reasons wouldn't necessarily be enough to take the Swamp over the Disciple here, but together, it's enough of a push for me.

**My pick:** **Snow-Covered Swamp**

**Pack 2, Pick 4:** **Martyr of Bones**, **Rune Snag**, **Sun's Bounty**, **Simian Brawler**, **Martyr of Spores**, **Rimebound Dead**, **Kjeldoran Javelineer**, **Drelnoch**, **Gutless Ghoul**, **Balduvian Rage**, **Mystic Melting**, **Jokulmorder**

[My pick:](#)

Both **Rune Snag** and **Rimebound Dead** are fair picks here, but both are likely to come back and/or have later incarnations down the road. My pick was **Gutless Ghoul**, a simple-seeming creature I'm growing increasingly fond of. The stats are fine and the snow status is nice, but really, it's just a very effective card on its own and especially with Garza's A.

**My pick:** **Gutless Ghoul**

**Pack 2, Pick 5:** **Ronom Hulk**, **Orcish Bloodpainter**, **Squall Drifter**, **Rimewind Taskmage**, **Snow-Covered Mountain**, **Chill to the Bone**, **Surging Dementia**, **Thermal Flux**, **Ronom Unicorn**, **Mishra's Bauble**, **Darien**, **King of Kjeldor**

[My pick:](#)

That's a fairly late **Ronom Hulk** and **Darien**, but of course we'll be sending them on their way. Finally, finally, we get our first **Rimewind Taskmage**. This incredibly flexible card is one of the major reasons to draft this archetype. The more the merrier I say.

**My pick:** **Rimewind Taskmage**

**Pack 2, Pick 6:** **Orcish Bloodpainter**, **Rimewind Taskmage**, **Snow-Covered Mountain**, **Krovikan Scoundrel**, **Rune Snag**, **Martyr of Sands**, **Bull Aurochs**, **Glacial Plating**, **Adarkar Windform**, **Gristle Grinner**

**Adarkar Windform?** That's cool, although a little weird. It's a very nice card to be seen this late. Alas, it's a "mere" win condition, something our deck hardly needs. Another Taskmage is what the doctor ordered here.



**My pick:** Rimewind Taskmage

**Pack 2, Pick 7:** Rite of Flame, Feast of Flesh, Martyr of Frost, Swift Maneuver, Icefall, Surging Might, Surging Aether, Zombie Musher, Wilderness Elemental

By the way, the reason this deck doesn't need to seek out win conditions is because that's what B/U has left after Rimewind guys and snow lands are picked off. The latter are what make this archetype so effective, not having speedier or beefier creatures. Frankly, that's not going to happen. After our enablers and users are taken, with a few tier one options along the way, we'll find the actual damage dealers. I admit this seems a tad late for a Musher, but it's not impossible. Regardless, it's the easy pick for this pack.

**My pick:** Zombie Musher

**Pack 2, Pick 8:** Icefall, Grim Harvest, Swift Maneuver, Rimebound Dead, Snow-Covered Plains, Kjeldoran Javelineer, Drelnoch, Balduvian Frostwaker

[My pick:](#)

Using the analysis above, it's easy to see why Frostwalker wasn't even under consideration. A three mana 1/1 has to have a pretty spectacular ability to be considerable, and this one's certainly isn't. While the attacking lands are slightly more mana efficient than **Chilling Shade**, it compensates by making your main strategy actually vulnerable. If you absolutely need a way to win, or if your opponent is *seriously* weak to fliers, than maybe... I just haven't encountered those particular scenarios yet in CCC.

The Plains was the card I was about to take, but this deck's color concerns were still weighing on my mind. I also assumed, erroneously as it turned out, that there would be some other opportunity to take an off-color snow land. In a last second 180, I went with the **Rimebound Dead** as adequate defense and another minor enabler. My experiences with this card have been mixed, but when it does work, you're really grateful its there. I figured a little more defense couldn't hurt. As it turned out though, were I to do this pick again I may go the other way. It's safe to say in either direction you go it's a pretty close pick.

**My pick:** Rimebound Dead

**Pack 2, Pick 9:** Snow-Covered Swamp, Drelnoch, Martyr of Ashes, Surging Dementia, Survivor of the Unseen, Rimewind Cryomancer, Magmatic Core

Not even a question on this one. A choice between on-color snow land versus a second Cryomancer? Good thing this Swamp over at p2p1 wasn't even in consideration. Umm, thanks table?

**My pick:** Snow-Covered Swamp

**Pack 2, Pick 10:** Martyr of Spores, Karplusan Wolverine, Bull Aurochs, Boreal Griffin, Surging Aether, Luminesce

At this point this looks strictly like a sideboard card, but one I'm glad to have around.

**My pick:** Surging Aether

**Pack 2, Pick 11:** Icefall, Krovikan Scoundrel, Survivor of the Unseen, Martyr of Sands, Thermopod

See, I told you'd we get one without bending over backwards for it. Blue is an unpopular color in *Coldsnap*, and there are commons within Blue ahead of this.

**My pick:** Survivor of the Unseen

**Pack 2, Pick 12:** Martyr of Bones, Sun's Bounty, Martyr of Spores, Kjeldoran Javelineer

One of these colors is not like the others...

**My pick:** Martyr of Bones

**Pack 2, Pick 13:** Orcish Bloodpainter, Surging Dementia, Thermal Flux

Now that I've heroically defeated the **Surging Dementia** deck, we can go around to picking minor sideboard effects that will probably never be used anyway. But there's a chance, and that gives it more weight than a tiny Red hate draft.

**My pick:** Thermal Flux

**Pack 2, Pick 14:** Krovikan Scoundrel, Martyr of Sands

See above, but more so.

**My pick:** Krovikan Scoundrel

**Pack 2, Pick 15:** Martyr of Frost

So is the **Martyr of Frost** any good? This table doesn't think so, and I'm inclined to agree. Interestingly, the mono-Blue deck is viable in CCC, partially because Blue is so unwanted, and partially because this card does fill a niche there. We're not drafting that deck, which in this case means we can't confirm this will actually counter something. That's a rather harsh drawback on a card designed to counter stuff. Don't get me wrong here, I'll take it. Though as far as I'm concerned, for the deck this Martyr is like any other.

**My pick:** Martyr of Frost

## Pack 3

**Pack 3, Pick 1:** Snow-Covered Forest, Goblin Rimerunner, Kjeldoran Outrider, Surging Aether, Boreal Centaur, Gutless Ghoul, Rite of Flame, Grim Harvest, Martyr of Frost, Kjeldoran War Cry, Grim Harvest, Cryoclast, Deepfire Elemental, Mishra's Bauble, Arcum Dagsson

[My pick:](#)

The funny thing here isn't how awful this pack is, it's how I still managed to make the wrong pick regardless. I was still riding the confidence wave over the wheeled Snow-Covered Swamp from before. Hence, I disregarded the Forest here, not even putting together the idea that Forest ≠ Swamp. (Please don't tell my bosses I can't tell lands apart.)

Anyway, the right pick here is Snow-Covered Forest, if only for a safety net of snow not materializing in pack 3. Sadly, that Ghoul looked tempting for the reasons given above, and really, I was just annoyed with such a weak offering. And no, the Bauble didn't enter the picture. I was fairly sure this deck was 18 lands, just like I was sure that the remaining 22 slots were earmarked for things a little finer. The Forest is the right pick, but a 2/2 that's not **Garza's Assassin** was taken here, to my chagrin.

**My pick:** Gutless Ghoul

**Pack 3, Pick 2:** Sound the Call, Ronom Serpent, Squall Drifter, Goblin Furrier, Rimebound Dead, Martyr of Ashes, Martyr of Bones, Thermal Flux, Sun's Bounty, Thermopod, Simian Brawler, Tresserhorn Skyknight, Balduvian Rage, Woolly Razorback

[My pick:](#)

A little easier, and correct this time too. Another nice benefit to lots of snow lands is a very consistent **Ronom Serpent**. The Serpent, besides being a fine attacker, also gums up the ground nicely, and as soon as it hits play. I like immediacy in my decks.

**My pick:** Ronom Serpent

**Pack 3, Pick 3:** Martyr of Ashes, Surging Dementia, Survivor of the Unseen, Ronom Unicorn, Aurochs Herd, Snow-Covered Swamp, Kjeldoran Javelineer, Frozen Solid, Zombie Musher, Magmatic Core, Sheltering Ancient, Arctic Flats, Braid of Fire

[My pick:](#)

Had there been a Forest from p3p1, then the Musher would be an automatic here. As it is, I still think it's the right pick. The four-spot in the curve is fairly light at this point, and of course Musher kicks booty. I wouldn't fault a Swamp pick here, but Musher just seems more influential. On the assumption we'll get at least one more snow land before the draft is out:

**My pick:** Zombie Musher

**Pack 3, Pick 4:** Karplusan Wolverine, Surging Dementia, Thermal Flux, Ronom Unicorn, Frostweb Spider, Chilling Shade, Goblin Furrier, Boreal Griffin, Ronom Serpent, Boreal Druid, Balduvian Frostwaker, Phobian Phantasm

Hopefully by now my philosophy would be pretty clear. A few transient victory conditions versus a consistent defending/attacking snake. I don't see an issue here.

**My pick:** Ronom Serpent

**Pack 3, Pick 5:** Krovikan Mist, Swift Maneuver, Martyr of Spores, Aurochs Herd, Karplusan Wolverine, Snow-Covered Swamp, Kjeldoran Javelineer, Frozen Solid, Zombie Musher, Tresserhorn Skyknight, Cryoclast

[My pick:](#)

Sadly for this archetype, there's this "little" monster known as **Ronom Hulk**. It's gigantic, and kind of bullet-proof. Its existence, particularly the 5-power part, means taking some worse cards for a deck, just so you don't auto-lose to it. The exact quantity and order you take these lesser cards is still being debated, but I'd say this deck needs more than a couple of Taskmages. Thus, an unfortunately necessary **Frozen Solid** over Musher and Swamp.

"I can't believe I lost to **Ronom Hulk**! My deck was sooooo good! If only I had made it a 9.4 instead of a 9.8 and taken that **Chill to the Bone** that one pick..." How many times do you need to get beat by a common before you make the right adjustments? In all honesty, I probably should have taken this direction a bit sooner, **Deathmark** over Disciple perhaps. Better late than never.

**My pick:** Frozen Solid

**Pack 3, Pick 6:** Ronom Serpent, Goblin Furrier, Rimebound Dead, Frostweb Spider, Martyr of Bones, Rune Snag, Sun's Bounty, Rune Snag, Flashfreeze, Cover of Winter

[My pick:](#)

A third Serpent is a bit worse than two. On the other hand, a second Snag is quite a bit nicer than one. Those Hulk thoughts percolating also prompted this pick. I had just lost to Hulk in the previous draft, you see. And my deck was sooooo good!

**My pick:** Rune Snag

**Pack 3, Pick 7:** Surging Aether, Gutless Ghoul, Simian Brawler, Rite of Flame, Martyr of Frost, Swift Maneuver, Ursine Fylgja, Frost Marsh, Rime Transfusion

A nice, a double on-color snow land. Can't ask for much more in a seventh pick.

**My pick:** Frost Marsh

**Pack 3, Pick 8:** Krovikan Scoundrel, Rune Snag, Martyr of Sands, Bull Aurochs, Chilling Shade, Goblin Furrier, Ronom Serpent, Freyalise's Radiance

See pick #6, except replace second Snag with third Snag. Actually the third Snag and third Ronom Serpent are both fine sideboard cards, although against different decks. The Snag just had a higher chance of being played main.

**My pick:** Rune Snag

**Pack 3, Pick 9:** Kjeldoran Outrider, Surging Aether, Rite of Flame, Grim Harvest, Martyr of Frost, Cryoclast, Arcum Dagsson

A second Aether far outweighs a minor rare or second Grim Harvest.

**My pick:** Surging Aether

**Pack 3, Pick 10:** Goblin Furrier, Rimebound Dead, Martyr of Ashes, Martyr of Bones, Thermal Flux, Sun's Bounty

Considering where I took the previous Rimebound Dead, you'd think this would be a pretty easy pick. You'd be right.

**My pick:** Rimebound Dead

**Pack 3, Pick 11:** Surging Dementia, Survivor of the Unseen, Snow-Covered Swamp, Kjeldoran Javelineer, Frozen Solid

How does *eleventh* have a Snow-Covered Swamp, and worse, how does that pick not be an automatic? With visions of Rimebound Dead drafting freshly entered, another snow land seemed acceptable. Be aware though, as I was dimly aware then, that this pick is a bit risky. The Frozen Solid is so much worse against any non-Hulk decks, but if that's the only way you can lose...

**My pick:** Snow-Covered Swamp

**Pack 3, Pick 12:** Surging Dementia, Thermal Flux, Goblin Furrier, Balduvian Frostwaker

Fine, fine, fine I'll take the freakin' Frostwalker. Will all y'all get off my back over this guy? There's a reason he's twelfth!

**My pick:** Balduvian Frostwaker

**Pack 3, Pick 13:** Karplusan Wolverine, Kjeldoran Javelineer, Tresserhorn Skyknight

God help them if they try to fight with one of those crazy First Strike decks. I got your 0th Strike right here.

**Pick:** Tresserhorn Skyknight

**Pack 3, Pick 14:** Martyr of Bones, Sun's Bounty

With one click, I give them a problem and take the solution. Drafting can be pretty convoluted sometimes!


**My pick:** Martyr of Bones

**Pack 3, Pick 15:** Rite of Flame

Sometimes it's not.

**My pick:** Rite of Flame

Final deck analysis: Blue was clearly the color to be in this draft. Black was a little more iffy, but there was a good reason to try, and not a really a great signal to change directions. For a snow deck this one is pretty solid, although one more Taskmage would have been nice. It does have a good curve, good enablers, and decent finishers. It petered out a bit from the last pack, but it would be very hard to top pack 1. If it draws the right mana, it shouldn't need too much help after that. Before getting all results-oriented, I'd say this is a fine deck and a mostly well-executed draft. After a little number crunching, here's the final list:

Coldsnap Draft			
Main Deck 40 cards		Sideboard	
2 Frost Marsh	1 Frozen Solid	1 Balduvian Frostwaker	
5 Island	1 Grim Harvest	1 Krovikan Scoundrel	
2 Snow-Covered Island	3 Rune Snag	1 Luminesce	
2 Snow-Covered Plains	5 other spells	2 Martyr of Bones	
		1 Martyr of Frost	

3 Snow-Covered Swamp	1 Mystic Melting
4 Swamp	1 Rimewind Cryomancer
18 lands	1 Rite of Flame
1 Chilling Shade	2 Surging Aether
1 Disciple of Tevesh Szat	1 Surging Dementia
1 Frost Raptor	1 Thermal Flux
1 Garza's Assassin	1 Tresserhorn Skyknight
2 Gutless Ghoul	14 sideboard cards
1 Heidar, Rimewind Master	
2 Rimebound Dead	
2 Rimewind Taskmage	
2 Ronom Serpent	
1 Survivor of the Unseen	
3 Zombie Musher	
17 creatures	

## Round 1 - TheBigBullet Limited Rating: 1766

**Game 1:** The first hand of the tournament was an easy mulligan. The next six cards contained 2 **Rune Snag**, **Zombie Musher**, and three lands; a fine starter. We bounce back off each other for a bit. **Rune Snag** hits one **Aurochs Herd**, while another came down after I tap out for a **Ronom Serpent**. The third **Aurochs Herd** had to get Snagged again, as they plus the **Bull Aurochs** would have been able to punch through **Serpent**. Unfortunately, this left me unequipped to handle **Ronom Hulk**. At 10 life, I have very little time to find an answer. It doesn't happen and the Hulk takes down game 1. **Frozen Solid**, I miss ye!

I side in two **Surging Aether** for a **Rune Snag** and a **Gutless Ghoul**. His deck was a bit high-end, so I wasn't worried about having a dead Snag in hand. The two Aether were in because his deck was pricey, which in turn would give me the extra time to get the Rimewind dudes online. Of course in a pinch, they can slow down **Ronom Hulk** for a turn or two.

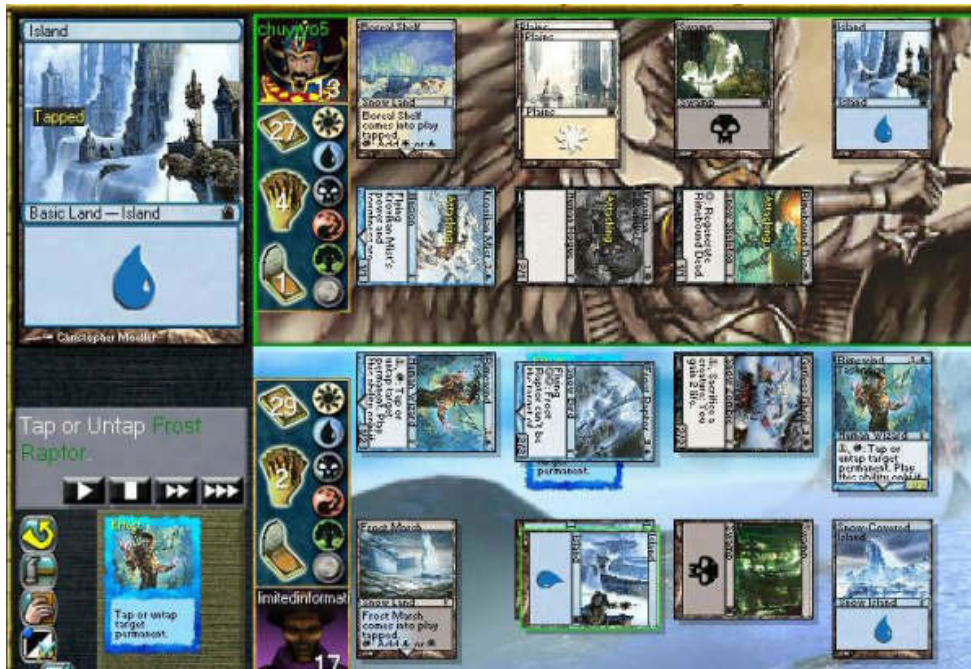
**Game 2:** This one was rather amusing. Despite 18 lands, the deck is stuck on three the whole game. Luckily those three lands are enough to cast **Frost Raptor** and **Chilling Shade**, which in turn enable an active **Rimewind Taskmage**. The deck still would have been in trouble if my opponent hadn't had an absurdly slow start himself. His first play was an inactive **Rimewind Taskmage**, followed by **Drelnoch**. Near the end we get into a bit of a race, but I had too much of the opening advantage. His deck seems to be completely devoid of removal, so with a **Taskmage** still pulling Squire duty, the fliers are enough.

**Game 3:** We both start out slowly, mostly working on developing our resources rather than any kind of aggression. TBB starts **Aurochs Herd** progression, but I find my 6th mana and start pulling off one of the more deadly combinations in **Coldsnap**: **Garza's Assassin** with **Grim Harvest**. My opponent's lack of removal really comes into play here, as without any, he has no chance to break up the recover combo. With infinite removal available, his offense is completely shut down. **Chilling Shade** and **Heidar** take the official win.



## Round 2 - Chuyiy05 Limited Rating:1741

**Game 1:** This guy's deck was a solid three-color special, rather rare for *Coldsnap* drafts. He missed a land drop, and his mana situation is further slowed via Taskmage's *Rishadan Port* impressions. The mana denial turns out to be a bit of waste, as his deck is just full of cheap guys. The critical turn comes when we start racing, and my Taskmage untaps *Frost Raptor* to block his *Krovikan Mist*. That interaction seemed to have been unseen by Chuyiyo, or perhaps he just hoped I would miss it. Either way, the Mist dies for free and the Raptor beats him down unhindered.



**Game 2:** His deck looks a lot better this game, with abundant mana and solid threats. My draw is a bit slow, which allows his creatures to do a lot of early damage. A *Krovikan Scoundrel* with *Rime Transfusion* takes a *Frozen Solid* when I'm at 6 life, which seems to be the stabilizer, especially with an active Taskmage out. Things went a bit downhill after that.

Part of the reason was a series of strong draws from Chuyiyo, especially a *Grim Harvest* and *Krovikan Rot*. The Harvest got back his *Gristle Grinner*, and I'm thinking I'm in serious trouble. With *Frozen Solid* otherwise occupied, two good recover cards in the graveyard, and me without credible threats, I don't see how I'll actually be able to stop him in time. All I've got at this point is *Garza's Assassin* in play and a *Rune Snag* in hand. This won't stop the recover cards, but it will be enough to counter the *Gristle Grinner*. Maybe he'll start to flood? Chuyiyo taps his remaining mana for... *Rimewind Cryomancer*? Why in the world would he practically tap out to play a Blue creature with two recover cards in the graveyard, when I have *Garza's Assassin* in play? That's a good question, but I have the answer: Because I so expected him to play the Zombie that turn, I just tossed out *Rune Snag* without even processing what he's doing. It's not a Zombie!? Alt U, Alt U! Whoops on that. He makes an insanely bad play and I counter, literally, with a worse one. With a full untap and plenty of lands at his disposal, I can't beat the dual recover cards and go down badly in game 2.

**Game 3:** My deck, feeling embarrassed for me, decides to grant the perfect draw in game 3. How does that look? Something like double *Musher*, double *Ronom Serpent* and a *Rimewind Taskmage* against a particularly slow draw that happens to include a *Boreal Sheaf*. Nice recovery, deck.

## Round 3 - CoryMac Limited Rating: 1818

**Game 1:** Cory's deck, unlike my previous rounds, was a two-color, highly efficient machine. Triple *Martyr of Spores*, *Boreal Centaurs*, *Simian Brawlers*, with a bit of Red removal kicked in. It was very fast, but this game my deck had all the answers. *Ronom Serpents*, *Mushers* and a *Dead* completely hold the ground while *Heidar*, *Rimewind Master* finally gets his time in the sun (which he hates). Cory gives it his full shot, but Taskmage untapping Heidar made things look a bit for problematic for him. After seeing a *Chilling Shade* as the actual damage source, Cory concedes.

**Game 2:** This game was by far the most difficult of the tournament. Cory's early *Martyr of Ashes* and *Boreal Centaur* do damage against my fairly slow draw. I'm trying to balance out playing enough guys to stay alive while not getting blown away by the Martyr. Eventually by the way Cory's been playing, I put him at having exactly one Red card in hand. Up to this point we had been trading spells, so it was mostly the same board since the beginning. Cory attempted *Icefall* tricks on my snow lands, but I wasn't really having trouble finding mana, although I couldn't stay above five. Finally, with Cory now at three cards in hand and an *Icefall* in the graveyard, I played a *Musher* with a snow land untapped. Cory dutifully attacked with *Centaur* and I blocked and regenerated the *Musher*. While I really didn't want to lose my board, at the very least Cory would need all three of his cards to be Red cards, and even then, he'd lose his creatures too. Cory did indeed have the three Red cards, and as one was a *Greater*



Stone Spirit, I could see why he was somewhat indifferent to Wrathing the board. Greater Stone Spirit was a lot of trouble for this deck. I started finding blockers to put in the way of it, but Cory's Ronom Hulk was particularly menacing. With unblockability and Firebreathing on command, the Hulk represented too much damage to overcome.

Game 3: Whew, these were some exciting games! The matchup looked almost 50/50 really, it was simply a matter of whether I'd get defenses online before Cory overran my life total. I was looking forward to finishing our sequence... Except the coffee shop I was playing at was closing. I like this store, a lot of LI is spawned there, and I didn't feel like overstaying my welcome this particular day. So with apologies to Cory, and to you for the anti-climactic finish, I gave Cory the match. Obviously I didn't actually concede, I just disconnected and made him wait 8 minutes for the client to assert itself (kidding!). I thanked Cory for the fun games, he did the same, and Cory took his deserved match and tournament win.

So was the deck a success? Maybe... but it wasn't perfect. That Ronom Hulk issue was serious, so much so that almost all of my

game losses were a direct result of the Beast. Yet almost all of my game wins were a result of taking snow lands and snow-appreciators highly, even over Hulk stoppers. So it's a tricky balance, and I think a lot of it has to do with feel. In this case, you could look at the packs and see the Hulks were going late, which means one of two things. Either everyone was so loaded up on Hulks that they didn't need extras (bad) or they were all going to the lone Green drafter, who would probably end up with one of the best decks at the table. One could assume this deck would end up playing the best deck in the finals, and hence, would need to deal with the Hulk at that time. So in either case, Ronom Hulk was going to be a factor, and that wasn't fully taken into account. At some point, the deck should have picked up another answer to it, either Frozen Solid or Chill to the Bone or that Deathmark. These are tough lessons, mostly because the deck ended up doing well despite the error. It was an error all the same. That's why results are only half the picture with drafts. If you can look back and say you made a mistake, believe it and do better next time, victories notwithstanding. Just keep looking for ways to get better, and soon enough you won't need luck to hold to your hand. It's difficult to focus on the process rather than the outcome, but worth adhering to on the road to improvement. That's all I can say this time, so as always, thanks for reading.



-Noah Weil



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