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To the Nines

Quentin Martin
Limited Information
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Future Sight Chat with Ryan Miller
 Wed., April 25th
 4 pm PST / 7 pm EST

Most readers probably will not have played *Ninth Edition* as a draft format. This means that it will be a completely new format where card evaluation will be happening for the first time in almost every pack. Normally, Limited formats are mainstream insofar as they get played as premier events. This means that the pros draft these formats a lot, and we discuss almost any interesting decision that comes up—dissecting it from every possible angle, even throwing in similar situations, to see what everyone thinks is the best outcome. Drafting *Ninth* is a refreshing change.



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I mentioned wacky draft strategies in my last article, and I forgot to mention that it is possible to draft an Overgrowth deck in 999. It consists of the enchant land, Scaled Wurms, and Craw Wurms, and is often combined with blue card draw to make use of all the mana you have available to you. It can be a lot of fun, but be prepared to adapt if the cards don't come!

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I talked about card evaluation and the base qualities that good Limited cards possess last week. I also mentioned that *Ninth* is a great format to showcase these qualities. I stressed that tempo was far inferior here than in normal formats. I was, in part, in error. Tempo is far less important, but there are clear cases where it still holds true. Evasion creatures in *Ninth* rule the red zone. Luckily, they tend to be small in nature and can be dealt with by almost all the removal in the set. However, if you play a colour combination lacking in removal, then the value of tempo increases. Enough chitter-chatter, on to the draft walkthrough. Remember, qualities you should be looking for are bombs, fatties, evasion, removal, combat tricks, repeatable effects, tempo (acceleration), and card advantage.

Pack 1

Pack 1, Pick 1

Shatter, Pegasus Charger, Contaminated Bond, Llanowar Elves, Remove Soul, Sandstone Warrior, Wanderguard Sentry, Order of the Sacred Bell, Spineless Thug, Angelic Blessing, Zombify, Wurm's Tooth, Circle of Protection: Black, Loxodon Warhammer, Swamp

Click [here](#).

This pack contains only one white card of quality—a Pegasus Charger. This guy is a good pick as it is cheap, efficient and, more importantly, possesses flying. Remove Soul is the only blue card of note, and is far from a stellar first pick. It is, however, very playable in this format as it is cheap for a counterspell and a lot of the bombs in this format are creatures. Green has two playables—Llanowar Elves and Order of the Sacred Bell. The latter falls into the fattie category and is cheaply costed, whilst the elves are very cheap acceleration. However, the Order isn't fat enough to be picked over the elves. There are no red cards of note, and the only vaguely playable black card is Zombify which is borderline at best and dependant on the other cards you have picked. This brings us to the rare. Loxodon



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NOVELS

Time Spiral
 Time Spiral Cycle, Book I
 by Scott McGough

Warhammer, for any of you who missed drafting *Mirrodon*, is a bomb—one of epic proportions. It turns all of your guys into huge, race-swinging machines. Attached to a lowly 2/2, it generates a 10-point life swing every turn and will almost certainly trade your creatures off for better ones. This pick is not close, so I slam one of the best cards in the format.

Pick: Loxodon Warhammer

Pack 1, Pick 2

Holy Strength, Goblin Brigand, Sage Aven, Wood Elves, Looming Shade, Honor Guard, Raise Dead, Kavu Climber, Fugitive Wizard, Consume Spirit, Sanctum Guardian, Bottle Gnomes, Swamp, Final Punishment

Click [here](#).

Sage Aven is a flyer that provides a brief improvement of card selection, but its strength lies in its evasion. Wood Elves provide some acceleration and card advantage, but their 1/1 body is far from hot in this format and will almost certainly fail to trade for anything, so it is simply acceleration and a glorified chump-block (although in certain colour combinations the chump-block means they don't fall too behind on tempo...). Kavu Climber is what I like. It comes with a sizeable body at a reasonable cost. It is quintessential card advantage. Looming Shade and Consume Spirit are both strong cards, the first because it can grow massively in a heavy black deck, and in the same deck, the second is a removal spell. However, it is conditional on being in a relatively heavy black deck, containing at least nine or ten Swamps, and it is for this reason that I do not pick it.

Pick: Kavu Climber

Pack 1, Pick 3

Crossbow Infantry, Lightning Elemental, Storm Crow, Trained Armodon, Highway Robber, Infantry Veteran, Fear, Rootwalla, Flight, Phyrexian Hulk, Stream of Life, Traumatize, Plains

Click [here](#).

A fairly empty pack here, once again lacking in red or white playables, meaning it is unlikely that we will play these colours as they seem to be being cut. Crossbow Infantry and Infantry Veteran are both repeatable effects that will clog up and annoy the combat step. However, their impact is lessened slightly in *Ninth*, because most creatures are large enough to not worry about being hassled by the first Infantry and the second is limited only to whilst attacking. We are also fairly sure that white is being cut. Trained Armodon and Rootwalla are similar in many ways. The first requires double green to cast, which is certainly a limitation to factor in, whilst the second is larger. In *NinthEdition*, 2/2s tend to get dwarfed quickly by 3/3s, which are about the size of the average creature, meaning that as a 4/4, the Rootwalla is by far the better card.

Pick: Rootwalla

Pack1, Pick 4

Crossbow Infantry, Lightning Elemental, Storm Crow, Trained Armodon, Highway Robber, Infantry Veteran, Bog Imp, Scaled Wurm, Dehydration, Boiling Seas, Mountain, Kraken's Eye

Click [here](#).

A near-identical pack, once more with the dribble of poor to average White playables. The choice we are faced with this time around is Trained Armodon or Scaled Wurm. The latter is certainly fat, but eight is rather expensive and, as such, I would really prefer to play only one of them. They are relatively late picks and I am certain I will be able to pick up another should I want one.

Pick: Trained Armodon

Pack 1, Pick 5

Demystify, Enfeeblement, Fishliver Oil, Shatter, Raging Goblin, Sift, Zodiac Monkey, Giant Cockroach, Reminisce, Demon's Horn, Forest

Click [here](#).

A few powerful cards coming late here. Zodiac Monkey is a cheap beater and comes with part-time evasion. Enfeeblement and Giant Cockroach are more average black cards. The conditional aspect of Enfeeblement is again the reason for it not being a high pick even though it can be classified as removal. Which brings us to Sift—card advantage in a tin. This is one of the more powerful commons in the set

and, assuming we can stay alive and not fall too behind on tempo (which might prove quite difficult as we will probably end up being blue-green and, hence, removal light), will often secure us victory. I was beginning to wonder if we would get a clear signal as to what our second colour should be.

Pick: [Sift](#)

Pack 1, Pick 6

[Mending Hands](#), [Hollow Dogs](#), [Reclaim](#), [Sandstone Warrior](#), [Wanderguard Sentry](#), [Spineless Thug](#), [Angelic Blessing](#), [Groundskeeper](#), [Swamp](#), [Megrim](#)

Click [here](#).

[Mending Hands](#) is a weak combat trick; slightly more powerful than it seems to be because it is so cheap, but weak nonetheless. [Hollow Dogs](#) is a large attacker but otherwise an unimpressive five-mana 3/3. Ditto for [Wanderguard Sentry](#). It is unlikely that any of these cards will make it into my deck, so I picked the [Sandstone Warrior](#)— a card that could give my potentially blue-green deck troubles as I cannot remove it. Not a happy pick, and an argument can be made for almost any of the other cards. Basically, a blank on all counts.

Pick: [Sandstone Warrior](#)

Pack 1, Pick 7

[Holy Strength](#), [Goblin Brigand](#), [Wood Elves](#), [Looming Shade](#), [Razortooth Rats](#), [Natural Spring](#), [Time Ebb](#), [Reflexes](#), [Swamp](#)

Click [here](#).

I am surprised to see [Razortooth Rats](#) this late as it is a strong card (evasion). It confirms my suspicions that black is a potential option. There's another [Wood Elves](#), one which I am tempted to pick this time around because I seem to be drifting into blue-green and might need it for its tempo nature, but it is also likely I will be able to pick up another later on. [Time Ebb](#) is almost card advantage, insofar as it cost you a card to deny them a draw, and on the side you remove a guy from play. It falls more into the tempo category, but it can still be viewed from an advantageous perspective. As we slip further into blue-green, this will be one of the cards we need to stay ahead on the board and to, at least temporarily if not combined with counter magic, deal with problem creatures.

Pick: [Time Ebb](#)

Pack 1, Picks 8 through 15

[Reflexes](#), [Plague Beetle](#), [Sea's Claim](#), [Raging Goblin](#), [Giant Cockroach](#), [Withering Gaze](#), [Web](#), [Mountain](#)

Pick: [Giant Cockroach](#)

[Shatter](#), [Contaminated Bond](#), [Spineless Thug](#), [Angelic Blessing](#), [Wurm's Tooth](#), [Circle of Protection: Black](#), [Swamp](#)

Pick: [Circle of Protection: Black](#)

[Holy Strength](#), [Wood Elves](#), [Raise Dead](#), [Fugitive Wizard](#), [Bottle Gnomes](#), [Swamp](#)

Pick: [Wood Elves](#)

[Storm Crow](#), [Fear](#), [Flight](#), [Stream of Life](#), [Plains](#)

Pick: [Stream of Life](#)

[Storm Crow](#), [Bog Imp](#), [Mountain](#), [Kraken's Eye](#)

Pick: [Storm Crow](#)

[Fishliver Oil](#), [Reminisce](#), [Demon's Horn](#)

Pick: [Reminisce](#)

[Angelic Blessing](#), [Swamp](#)

Pick: [Angelic Blessing](#)

Swamp

Pick: Swamp

Nothing really of note here as the last few picks rotate around. We wheeled a late Wood Elves which I was really happy about, other than that, just dross.

To review: So far we have a collection of solid green creatures, Time Ebb and Sift as blue spells, and the holy bomb of Loxodon Warhammer. We're looking to continue to improve in these colours, focussing on the theme of card advantage, whilst also being wary that we are an inherently removal light colour and will therefore need several temp cards, such as bounce and acceleration, to stay in the game if faced by opposing evasion creatures.

Pack 2

Pack 2, Pick 1

Venerable Monk, Goblin Mountaineer, Sleight of Hand, Tree Monkey, Festering Goblin, Pegasus Charger, Contaminated Bond, Llanowar Elves, Remove Soul, Seething Song, Soul Feast, Circle of Protection: Red, Orcish Artillery, Magnivore, Swamp

Click [here](#).

The best card in this pack by a long way is Orcish Artillery. For those of you who are surprised, give it a moment to sink in. It is a dominating repeatable effect. I hope not to face it with any deck, especially with the blue-green deck I am drafting. Out of our colours (remember, we are not yet locked in white and might well go black if the cards come), Pegasus Charger is the only other strong playable, but there are two strong on-colour cards so we won't stray just yet. Sleight of Hand is not one of them. It is good and will almost always make my deck—especially as I want to dig to my Warhammer as soon as possible, but there are better cards left. It's a toss-up between Remove Soul and Llanowar Elves. The latter is the better card but I often find that, depending on colour combinations, it can be replaced by Rampant Growth. Remove Soul is fairly strong, and I really like it in blue-green where it can be one of few outs against bombs, especially when combined with a bounce spell if you draw it a little late. This is a really close pick, but at the moment I want to shore up the colour combination's failings.



Pick: Remove Soul

Pack 2, Pick 2

Suntail Hawk, Balduvian Barbarians, Boomerang, Overgrowth, Foul Imp, Skyhunter Prowler, Demystify, Enfeeblement, Giant Growth, Fishliver Oil, Demolish, Phantom Warrior, Ley Druid, Plains

Click [here](#).

Boomerang fills in the deficiencies once more but is again replaceable by the superior Time Ebb. Giant Growth is an awesome card but is simply outclassed by the Phantom Warrior. This guy doesn't have any old type of evasion, this guy has Evasion! Nothing else in the pack is exciting.

Pick: Phantom Warrior

Pack 2, Pick 3

Goblin Sky Raider, Aven Cloudchaser, Razortooth Rats, Natural Spring, Time Ebb, Goblin Piker, Horned Turtle, Giant Spider, Mind Rot, Veteran Cavalier, Spirit Link, Rod of Ruin, Swamp

Click [here](#).

With the Warrior in our pocket, it is unlikely we will sway from blue-green unless offered something incredibly juicy. Giant Spider is superior to Horned Turtle in every way. It is one of the best blockers in the format—shutting down most flying creatures with ease. It is a close call between it and Time Ebb, given that we our blue-green, but I feel should edge it out on pure power alone. There is, however, a repeatable effect in the booster. It is also removal. It might come in a pricey package, which in some formats would seriously decrease its value, but here, especially in blue-green, Rod of Ruin finds a very happy home.

Pick: [Rod of Ruin](#)

Pack 2, Pick 4

[Firebreathing](#), [Bog Imp](#), [Scaled Wurm](#), [Dehydration](#), [Stone Rain](#), [Aven Fisher](#), [Unholy Strength](#), [Urza's Mine](#), [Levitation](#), [Biorhythm](#), [Forest](#), [Swarm of Rats](#)

Click [here](#).

[Dehydration](#) is a poor form of removal, but it does shut almost any non-defensive creature off; it's a poor man's [Assassinate](#). [Levitation](#) is a tricky card to evaluate. It, at the very least, is a great finisher, letting all your men swoop in on the last turn, but it is more than that. But not much more... You will get destroyed by it on occasion; other times it will stick in your hand whilst your other blue creatures attack with their innate wings. Luckily for us, there is an [Aven Fisher](#) in the pick. Evasion—check. Card advantage—check. Move to check-out—click.

Pick: [Aven Fisher](#)

Pack 2, Pick 5

[Sacred Nectar](#), [Dark Banishing](#), [Elvish Berserker](#), [Crafty Pathmage](#), [Goblin Piker](#), [Horned Turtle](#), [Giant Spider](#), [Mind Rot](#), [Veteran Cavalier](#), [Blackmail](#), [Swamp](#)

Click [here](#).

Ooooooh—a [Dark Banishing](#). We know black is open, so this is an easy... Hey, wait a second. This might be an easy pick if we already had a [Rampant Growth](#) to help fix the mana, but we do not. What we do have is a [Kavu Climber](#), a [Phantom Warrior](#), and a [Trained Armodon](#). The only way we don't pick the Banishing is if there is something else of good power in our colours. Fortunately, there is a [Giant Spider](#).

Pick: [Giant Spider](#)

Pack 2, Picks 6 through 15

[Venerable Monk](#), [Goblin Mountaineer](#), [Sleight of Hand](#), [Tree Monkey](#), [Festering Goblin](#), [Mending Hands](#), [Firebreathing](#), [Ur-Golem's Eye](#), [Deathgazer](#), [Mountain](#)

Pick: [Sleight of Hand](#)

[Holy Day](#), [Norwood Ranger](#), [Goblin Sky Raider](#), [Stone Rain](#), [Aven Fisher](#), [Unholy Strength](#), [Anarchist](#), [Summer Bloom](#), [Swamp](#)

Pick: [Aven Fisher](#)

[Suntail Hawk](#), [Boomerang](#), [Overgrowth](#), [Fear](#), [Flight](#), [Dragon's Claw](#), [Dream Prowler](#), [Island](#)

Pick: [Boomerang](#)

[Goblin Mountaineer](#), [Sleight of Hand](#), [Tree Monkey](#), [Festering Goblin](#), [Contaminated Bond](#), [Seething Song](#), [Swamp](#)

Pick: [Sleight of Hand](#)

[Suntail Hawk](#), [Overgrowth](#), [Demystify](#), [Fishliver Oil](#), [Ley Druid](#), [Plains](#)

Pick: [Fishliver Oil](#)

[Goblin Sky Raider](#), [Natural Spring](#), [Time Ebb](#), [Veteran Cavalier](#), [Swamp](#)

Pick: [Time Ebb](#)

[Firebreathing](#), [Bog Imp](#), [Stone Rain](#), [Forest](#)

Pick: [Stone Rain](#)

[Sacred Nectar](#), [Crafty Pathmage](#), [Swamp](#)

Pick: [Crafty Pathmage](#)

[Firebreathing](#), [Mountain](#)

Pick: [Firebreathing](#)

Swamp

Pick: [Swamp](#)

The rest of this pack was all clear steering. I didn't have a single decision to make. The second [Aven Fisher](#) was a nice touch. [Time Ebb](#) and [Boomerang](#) means we now have multiple ways of dealing with creatures. The two [Sleight of Hands](#) help our card quality quota and get us one step close to the Hammer.

To review: We now have seventeen cards we would we happy to maindeck, so we will not be desperately searching for playables. We're not lacking in any particular area so we have the luxury to make picks purely from individual card power rather than to fill any niche that might be missing. A combat trick or another piece of acceleration wouldn't go amiss. Other than the Rod and Hammer, we don't have too many powerful cards to dig towards, so we could do with a few more fatties, but over all, the deck is ship shape.

Pack 3

Pack 3, Pick 1

[Samite Healer](#), [Panic Attack](#), [Mana Leak](#), [Naturalize](#), [Ravenous Rats](#), [Sacred Nectar](#), [Dark Banishing](#), [Elvish Berserker](#), [Crafty Pathmage](#), [Hill Giant](#), [Drudge Skeletons](#), [Gift of Estates](#), [Cowardice](#), [Island](#), [Spirit Link](#)

Click [here](#).

Again, another very disappointing pack. There is another [Dark Banishing](#) that we could take and this time it might be worth it, as there isn't much else. But the same reasons still hold—that we have no fix, and between bounce and countermagic it is possible for us to deal with creatures. With this in mind, and the fact that I do not want to splash, the [Mana Leak](#) finds its home. It should be noted that [Naturalize](#) is not a maindeck card in this format—it is something that you would like the luxury of having in the sideboard for any bombs (Warhammer-shaped ones for instance).

Pick: [Mana Leak](#)



Pack 3, Pick 2

[Hill Giant](#), [Demystify](#), [Enfeeblement](#), [Giant Growth](#), [Fishliver Oil](#), [Shatter](#), [Lava Axe](#), [Counsel of the Soratami](#), [Treetop Bracers](#), [Serpent Warrior](#), [Spellbook](#), [Anaconda](#), [Master Healer](#), [Island](#)

Click [here](#).

First off, [Master Healer](#) is insane. It's a repeatable effect, sure, but this one is so game-dominating that it's unlikely there will be something more important happening elsewhere on the board. This is a card that, if it goes uncountered, will destroy me. However, there are multiple cards in the pack that I want, so no hating will go on here. Not on my watch.

This pick is close. [Giant Growth](#), [Anaconda](#) and [Counsel of the Soratami](#) are all excellent cards. You could probably pick any one of them and defend your choice admirably. A combat trick is always welcome, especially as we have none so far and it will provide us with some welcome tempo. [Anaconda](#) is another sizeable creature with potential evasion. [Counsel of the Soratami](#) is one of the purest examples of card advantage around. The [Anaconda](#) is tempting because I could do with a few more cards, but I picked the Counsel. Partly because I just love more cards, because I think I will win if I just draw more, and partly because I wanted to dig to my Hammer and Rod.

Pick: [Counsel of the Soratami](#)

Pack 3, Pick 3

[Seething Song](#), [Pacifism](#), [Fear](#), [Rootwalla](#), [Flight](#), [Lava Axe](#), [Counsel of the Soratami](#), [Treetop Bracers](#), [Serpent Warrior](#), [Flashfires](#), [Treasure Trove](#), [Regeneration](#), [Mountain](#)

Click [here](#).

I'm surprised to see the [Pacifism](#) here given the lack of white in the first booster, but it doesn't concern me now. [Treetop Bracers](#) is a playable card, as it often provides you with large evasion creature, but it begs the two for one. [Treasure Trove](#) is one of those interesting cards. It is both card advantage and a repeatable effect. However, it costs eight mana just to replace itself. If you have a deck where you just cannot die, then it will find a home, but my deck isn't it. This leaves us with the choice of Counsel or [Rootwalla](#). [Rootwalla](#) is inferior to [Anaconda](#), so it would seem like Counsel is the easy choice. However, I've filled my imaginary quota for card draw and I want to fill my deck with creatures that can beat and make sure I won't die too early.

Pick: [Rootwalla](#)

Pack 3, Pick 4

[Warrior's Honor](#), [Flowstone Shambler](#), [Lumengrid Warden](#), [Craw Wurm](#), [Coercion](#), [Foot Soldiers](#), [Plague Beetle](#), [Rampant Growth](#), [Sea's Claim](#), [Urza's Power Plant](#), [Sacred Ground](#), [Swamp](#)

Click [here](#).

Finally, along comes a [Rampant Growth](#). Its acceleration is still wanted, but its splash potential has come a little too late. There is also a [Craw Wurm](#). That guy is a 6/4! It is the fat of which we have dreamed.

Pick: [Craw Wurm](#)

Pack 3, Pick 5

[Mending Hands](#), [Hollow Dogs](#), [Reclaim](#), [Rogue Kavu](#), [Sea Monster](#), [Grizzly Bears](#), [Scathe Zombies](#), [Glory Seeker](#), [Bog Wraith](#), [Whip Sergeant](#), [Swamp](#)

Click [here](#).

[Reclaim](#) is negative card advantage, and we have nothing that will make its way to the graveyard that we would really want to come back. [Grizzly Bears](#) is simply outclassed in *Ninth* by [Hill Giant](#) and his companions. This leaves us with [Sea Monster](#). This card is often maindeckable as a solid wall and possible attacker in blue-black and blue-red decks, but not here. Here, we draft it purely for the sideboard.

Pick: [Sea Monster](#)

Pack 3, Picks 6 through 15

[Warrior's Honor](#), [Flowstone Shambler](#), [Lumengrid Warden](#), [Craw Wurm](#), [Coercion](#), [Foot Soldiers](#), [Holy Day](#), [Norwood Ranger](#), [Sudden Impact](#), [Swamp](#)

Pick: [Craw Wurm](#)

[Honor Guard](#), [Raise Dead](#), [Fugitive Wizard](#), [Sea Monster](#), [Grizzly Bears](#), [Scathe Zombies](#), [Glory Seeker](#), [Tempest of Light](#), [Swamp](#)

Pick: [Sea Monster](#)

[Panic Attack](#), [Naturalize](#), [Contaminated Bond](#), [Llanowar Elves](#), [Seething Song](#), [Peace of Mind](#), [Mind Bend](#), [Plains](#)

Pick: [Llanowar Elves](#)

[Panic Attack](#), [Naturalize](#), [Ravenous Rats](#), [Sacred Nectar](#), [Elvish Berserker](#), [Crafty Pathmage](#), [Island](#)

Pick: [Naturalize](#)

[Demystify](#), [Fishliver Oil](#), [Shatter](#), [Serpent Warrior](#), [Spellbook](#), [Island](#)

Pick: [Serpent Warrior](#)

[Seething Song](#), [Fear](#), [Flight](#), [Treasure Trove](#), [Mountain](#)

Pick: [Treasure Trove](#)

[Coercion](#), [Plague Beetle](#), [Sea's Claim](#), [Swamp](#)

Pick: [Coercion](#)

Reclaim, Grizzly Bears, Swamp

Pick: Grizzly Bears

Norwood Ranger, Swamp

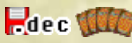
Pick: Norwood Ranger

Swamp

Pick: Swamp

Once more, I was on autopilot for these last picks. We pick up a few more sideboard cards in the form of the second Sea Monster and a Naturalize. We gain two more solid, needed cards for the main—Llanowar Elves and a second Craw Wurm.

We wound up with exactly the correct number of playables, which meant that deckbuilding was also simple. The final result of which was:

Ninth Edition Draft Deck		
Main Deck	Sideboard	
40 cards		
9 <u>Forest</u>	1 <u>Boomerang</u>	1 <u>Angelic Blessing</u>
8 <u>Island</u>	1 <u>Counsel of the Soratami</u>	1 <u>Circle of Protection: Black</u>
17 land	1 <u>Mana Leak</u>	1 <u>Coercion</u>
	1 <u>Remove Soul</u>	1 <u>Crafty Pathmage</u>
	1 <u>Sift</u>	1 <u>Firebreathing</u>
2 <u>Aven Fisher</u>	2 <u>Sleight of Hand</u>	1 <u>Fishliver Oil</u>
1 <u>Phantom Warrior</u>	2 <u>Time Ebb</u>	1 <u>Giant Cockroach</u>
2 <u>Craw Wurm</u>	1 <u>Loxodon Warhammer</u>	1 <u>Grizzly Bears</u>
1 <u>Giant Spider</u>	1 <u>Rod of Ruin</u>	1 <u>Naturalize</u>
1 <u>Kavu Climber</u>		1 <u>Norwood Ranger</u>
1 <u>Llanowar Elves</u>	11 other spells	1 <u>Reminisce</u>
2 <u>Rootwalla</u>		1 <u>Sandstone Warrior</u>
1 <u>Trained Armodon</u>		2 <u>Sea Monster</u>
1 <u>Wood Elves</u>		1 <u>Serpent Warrior</u>
12 creatures		1 <u>Stone Rain</u>
		1 <u>Storm Crow</u>
		1 <u>Stream of Life</u>
		3 <u>Swamp</u>
		1 <u>Treasure Trove</u>
		22 sideboard cards

My first match was against the guy who wound up with all the white cards. This left him with a high quality, very aggressive deck. I had Loxodon Warhammer to turn the tides in the first game after a blistering start from him. My Giant Spider held him off for a few turns in the second game, until the Warhammer once again reared its head.

I faced a black-green deck in the second round. His turn-three Royal Assassin was probably the worst card I could face. The game lasted till turn twelve, despite his Soul Feast, Gravediggered Highway Robbers and Razortooth Rats! I dug through my deck with my card draw and used my Eddies to stay alive, but I couldn't piece together my bounce and counters to deal with the Assassin and died with twelve cards in my deck (the bottom card of which I knew thanks to a Sleight), which still included my Warhammer and Rod of Ruin, both of which would have been game at any point. The second game boiled down to a race between his second-turn Zodiac Monkey and next-turn Razortooth Rats versus my Phantom Warrior and Aven Fishers. I drew ahead with an Eddy, he regained the ground with two Highway Robbers. I died a turn before I killed, as is always the case, and once more, either artifact would have won the game if I had drawn it.

My one regret is that I wound up blue-green, as it is one of the few archetypes (along with almost any white deck) that has to seriously factor in tempo. It should be noted that when I refer to tempo, I'm not referring to simply making a creature before your fourth turn, I'm talking about a situation where you can fall so significantly behind the board position that you have to make sacrifices like bad blocks just to stay alive. Even though the match I lost contained the games where I fell behind in tempo, my card

advantage should have led me to victory, and (as most losers chime) I was statistically unlucky to not have won at least one of those games...

Next week, I hope to have a little insight into *Future Sight*. For now, as of this writing, I have a Pro Tour (I'm still trying to work out how much I would pay to make it Limited, probably around \$300) to play.

Q

*Widely considered one of the world's foremost Limited competitors, Quentin Martin has four Limited Grand Prix Top 8s and a Top 8 at Pro Tour-Prague 2006. Between his **Magic** expertise and a background in philosophy, it's no surprise Quentin is well known for his strategic insight and theories on the game.*



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