



Kicker Playtest Cards

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When R&D designers and developers playtest a set, they use printed stickers attached to older **Magic** cards to make internal playtest proxies. Today we take a look at some of those playtest cards for *Planar Chaos* (code-named "Crackle," of the "Snap-Crackle-Pop" block) that show how some early kicker cards evolved into their printed versions.

Some cards remained relatively close to their finished versions. The design team knew they wanted to do an alternate-reality spin on one of the *Planeshift* battlemages, but the precise abilities for the blue and black kickers were up for debate.



This version had the potential to create an un-fun "Coercion with buyback" engine, and its abilities were changed to show off blue and black's alternate identities in *Planar Chaos*. The name and concept were so logical that they were kept all the way through to the finished card.

Some kicker cards lost their kicker mechanic altogether during development. "Nature's Reclamation" became the simpler **Krosan Grip**, and moved into *Time Spiral* (a set which features no kicker except for on its timeshifted cards). Note that "superfast" was the placeholder name for the split second keyword.



Other kicker cards changed radically in size and abilities, but retained their essential role. The idea of a green creature that starts small and gets bigger if you pay the kicker was kept from "Centaur Samurai" (no, there were no plans to introduce samurai into Dominaria), although its power, toughness, and keyword ability changed to become **Pouncing Wurm**. The "kicker = bigger" idea was revisited in *Future Sight* as the convoke mix-and-match card, **Kavu Primarch**.





There were several other kicker-riffic playtest cards for "Crackle" that we won't show here, as they may yet become or inspire new cards and mechanics in the future. Kicker is fertile ground as design space goes, and you'll be sure to see its legacy live on long past *Future Sight*.



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