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Jhoira Goes Up (Part 2 of 2)

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Building on a Budget
 Monday, July 9, 2007



hello everyone, and welcome back to Building on a Budget! Today's column is part 2 of 2 of my Jhoira Time Spiral Block Constructed deck evolution (Part 1 can be found [here](#)). When we left off last week, I had a 7-3 record and a deck that looked like this:

- Building on a Budget is dedicated to making decks that cost 30 tickets or less on **Magic Online**. Weekly deck testing is done using **Magic Online**.
- This week's format? *Time Spiral* Block Constructed. This means only *Time Spiral*, *Planar Chaos* and *Future Sight* are allowed!
- The Jhoira Vanguard avatar—no seriously—the Jhoira Avatar!

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Jhoira Block 2 dec

Main Deck
60 cards

11 Island	4 Deep-Sea Kraken	4 Cancel
11 Mountain	4 Greater Gargadon	4 Delay
22 lands	4 Jhoira of the Ghitu	3 Foresee
	4 Rift Elemental	4 Prismatic Lens
	16 creatures	4 Rift Bolt
		3 Think Twice
		22 other spells

I also closed my last column with the notion that I would be adding three new cards to the deck: **Sulfurous Blast**, **Take Possession**, and **Riddle of Lightning**. Well, this was not to be. Why not? The budget, that's why not!

Here's the current cost of the deck, as is:

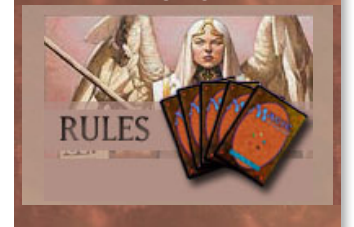
- Delay**: 0.75 Tickets Each (3)
- Greater Gargadon**: 1 Ticket Each (4)
- Jhoira: 2 Tickets Each (8)
- Deep-Sea Kraken**: 0.5 Tickets Each (2)
- Miscellaneous Commons/Uncommons: 1 Ticket Total
- Total: 18 Tickets

The original deck clocked in at eighteen tickets. When I went to add **Take Possession** to the deck, I found that they are currently selling for a whopping **SIX** tickets each! Now look, I've been known to fit in a slightly higher-dollar card into my deck if it's going to be the most important card I can have—but **Take Possession** was going to be a fun offshoot of a card, and not one that I would throw in a deck on a whim at 24 tickets a playset. Heck, at the current configuration, if I added two **Take Possession** to the deck, that would entirely kill the budget of the deck!

Along the same lines, I dismissed **Aeon Chronicler** in my initial build due to budgetary constraints. When I used **Aeon Chronicler** for two of the decks in my 10 Decks in 10 Weeks experiment (both in my [Aeon in Flux](#) and in my [Grim Outlook](#) decks), this guy ran about half-a-ticket. Nowadays, his price is up to a hefty four tickets.

Still, the majority of e-mails I received regarding this week's column asked why/if I could add my main suspend man to the Jhoira deck. "But Ben," you said, "it's perfect with Jhoira! You spend two mana and you get four cards. You'd have to spend 7 to get that same effect without Jhoira! It's a perfect fit for this deck! It's card advantage!"

I agree! When faced with a choice between a card that can be central to the deck as both a card-advantage engine and a finisher—one that has great synergy with multiple cards in the deck—and an offshoot two-of, I'll choose the multi-purpose, synergistic card any day.

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In short, sorry **Take Possession**—maybe after the Block Constructed Season cools off and you're at the 1-2 ticket price you deserve to be at, I'll give you a whirl. Until that happens, make mine Chronicer!

In: 3 **Aeon Chronicer** (+12) (30 Tickets)

On the other end of the spectrum, there's **Riddle of Lightning**. This *Future Sight* common is a great fit for a budget deck, and especially one that is running so many high-mana cost spells. **Riddle of Lightning** for **Greater Gargadon** or **Deep-Sea Kraken**? That's 10 to the dome!

In: 3 **Riddle of Lightning**

In order to make room for these six cards, six cards need to go. I'm happy to swap **Foresee** straight out for **Aeon Chronicer**—while **Foresee** is slightly faster than **Aeon Chronicer**, the Chronicer basically fills the same purpose in the deck (mid-game card drawing), and fits the suspend/Jhoira/Rift Elemental theme.

Out: 3 **Foresee**

The other cuts are one-ofs to make room for the **Riddle of Lightnings** in the deck. If all goes according to plan, **Riddle of Lightning** will act as a finisher. It can also act as spot removal if I'm desperate to kill a creature/stay alive. To make room for it, I decide to take out a **Delay**, a **Rift Bolt**, and a **Deep-Sea Kraken**.

Out: 1 **Rift Bolt**, 1 **Delay**, 1 **Deep-Sea Kraken** (-1.25) (28.75 Tickets)



Jhoira Goes Up 1			dec
Main Deck			
60 cards			
11 Island	3 Aeon Chronicer	4 Cancel	
11 Mountain	3 Deep-Sea Kraken	3 Delay	
22 lands	4 Greater Gargadon	4 Prismatic Lens	
	4 Jhoira of the Ghitu	3 Riddle of Lightning	
	4 Rift Elemental	3 Rift Bolt	
	18 creatures	3 Think Twice	
		20 other spells	

Game 1: WizardofAweZ (W/G Enchantments)

I get stuck on three mana, all of which is red. I do suspend double **Greater Gargadon**, put **Rift Elemental** on the board, and use **Rift Bolt** to clear the way for my little beater. On the fourth turn, he drops **Serra Avenger**. I swing into his flyer, and draw out a **Dawn Charm** (regenerating the Avenger) after blockers are declared. He puts **Mistmeadow Skulk** to the table, and I answer by killing his 3/3 guy with my second **Rift Bolt** of the game.

Well, his answer to that is to drop **Keen Sense**, **Daybreak Coronet** and **Daybreak Coronet** on his Skulk on turn six. I have no answer to a 7/7 vigilant, card-drawing, lifelinked Boggart, and I die in short order.

Record: 0-1

Game 2: Roachman61 (U/G/W Control)

This game, I draw four **Islands** in my opening hand. I suspend a third-turn **Deep-Sea Kraken**, but he just mows on through it and plays **Mystic Snake** to counter it once it unsuspends. I finally draw a **Prismatic Lens** and put **Rift Elemental** on the table. He uses **Gemhide Sliver** and **Scryb Ranger** to power out a **Maelstrom Djinn**. I draw a **Mountain** and I kill his 5/6 with a **Riddle of Lightning** (revealing **Greater Gargadon**) and suspend the Gargadon the following turn. When I try to bring down the Gargadon as an emergency blocker, he boops it with **Venser** and I lose.

Record: 0-2

This certainly isn't the way I started last week, and I can pinpoint my problems to two sources—not enough mana, and not the right colors of mana. In both games, I've been stuck on one color for far too long to make a go at the game, and I have been too short on mana to manage cards like **Aeon Chronicer**, and the such. In order to fix this problem, I head for the color-fixing land of budgetary choice—**Terramorphic Expanse**.

In: 4 **Terramorphic Expanse**

To make room for these four lands, I take out more one-ofs—in this case, a **Cancel**, a **Greater Gargadon**, and a **Delay**, as well as a **Mountain**. I keep having games where I draw 2+ Gargadons and **Deep-Sea Krakens**, and I only need so many 9+ mana monsters in my opening hand! In addition, I've only needed one well-timed counterspell in any given game to swing the tide in my favor. I don't mind lowering the count on these types of spells, as long as I have *any*.

Jhoira Goes Up 2			dec
Main Deck			
60 cards			

11 Island	3 Aeon Chronicler	3 Cancel
10 Mountain	3 Deep-Sea Kraken	2 Delay
4 Terramorphic Expanse	3 Greater Gargadon	4 Prismatic Lens
25 lands	4 Jhoira of the Ghitu	3 Riddle of Lightning
	4 Rift Elemental	3 Rift Bolt
	17 creatures	3 Think Twice
		18 other spells

Out: 1 Cancel, 1 Greater Gargadon, 1 Delay, 1 Mountain (26 tickets)
 In: 4 Terramorphic Expanse

Game 3: Firpo_Tamer (U/W Suspend)

I suspend Gargadon on turn one, drop Rift Elemental immediately thereafter, and then swing for three on turn three, and five on turn four. Meanwhile, he's suspended a Reality Strobe, and it's ticking down towards unsuspending. On my fifth turn, I make Rift Elemental a 3/1, sacrifice two lands to bring Greater Gargadon into play, and swing in for 12 (his remaining life total). He attempts to play Dust of Moments to bring his Strobe in early, but I have Cancel, which wins me the game right then and there.
 Record: 1-2

Game 4: jasonaccola4262 (Mono-Black Monsters)

He gets Sengir Nosferatu, Twisted Abomination, and Enslave on turns five, six and seven. Unfortunately for him, I get a double Prismatic Lens draw, which lets me suspend Aeon Chronicler on turn four, and then lets me put Rift Elemental plus Deep-Sea Kraken on turn five to create a clock. He never gets a chance to set up his monsters, and my Kraken finished him off with a Riddle of Lightning in my hand for the back-up win.
 Record: 2-2

Game 5: Whatisfgh (W/G Petroglyphs)

I get an early Rift Elemental, and he answers with Even the Odds and Muraganda Petroglyphs. I throw Deep-Sea Kraken into the air and start trading 9 damage for 7 damage for a turn. He kicks me down to 15 on his following swing, and leaves back a soldier token to block my Rift Elemental. I draw and suspend Greater Gargadon, remove three counters to make my Rift Elemental a 7/1, bring Deep-Sea Kraken into play, sacrifice all my lands to get the 9/7 on the board, and swing for 22. The 13 damage from my Elemental and Deep-Sea Kraken is enough for the win.
 Record: 3-2

Game 6: Benny (Wild Pair Slivers)

I kill his first two Slivers (Telekinetic and Dormant) with the blue removal spell known as Cancel. Unfortunately for me, I don't have really any offense going, and he gets out Wild Pair and uses Whitemane Lion and Gemhide Sliver to put a ton of Slivers in play. Whitemane Lion gets Dormant Sliver, then Reflex Sliver (so each of his new slivers can go towards mana to get more Slivers) and then Frenetic Sliver (to make Dormant Sliver go away when he's ready to win). I concede when he also gets Telekinetic Sliver to tap down all my permanents.
 Record: 3-3



Now some of you at home might be asking "Wait a second—isn't this a Jhoira deck? Did you take out the Jhoira when we weren't looking?" The sad truth is that it took until Game 6 until I drew my first Jhoira of this article—and it was after I was already way behind against the Sliver deck!

So three of my three losses were against decks that Sulfurous Blast would have hosed. I know I said I'd bring them in last week—now seems like a great time, especially since I've been reminded why I wanted them in the first place!

In: 3 Sulfurous Blast

Riddle of Lightning hasn't been great so far—it costs a lot of mana, and it's a finisher in a deck that already has lots of big-ticket finishers (Gargadon, Kraken). Moreover, it puts a Gargadon or Kraken on top of my deck in the mid-to-late game, and that's usually when I don't want to be drawing a Gargadon/Kraken the following turn!

Jhoira Goes Up 3		
Main Deck		
60 cards		
11 Island	3 Aeon Chronicler	3 Cancel
10 Mountain	3 Deep-Sea Kraken	4 Prismatic Lens
4 Terramorphic Expanse	3 Greater Gargadon	2 Riddle of Lightning
25 lands	4 Jhoira of the Ghitu	3 Rift Bolt
	4 Rift Elemental	3 Sulfurous Blast
	17 creatures	3 Think Twice
		18 other spells

Out: 2 Delay, 1 Riddle of Lightning (24.5)

Game 7: Raad15 (Jhoira Mirror)

He's playing the version of my deck from last week. The decider in this match is when I **Cancel** his Gargadon after he sacrifices down to four lands. He counters some of my guys, including taking out **Riddle of Lightning** with **Delay** twice. I run him out of countermagic with threats, and manage to get up to enough mana where I can hard-cast a **Greater Gargadon**, plus unsuspend a second one. He can't deal with two 9/7 creatures at the same time, and I have no problem running him over from that point.

Record: 4-3

Game 8: Paks8150 (R/W/B Slivers)

He gets early beats with double **Sidewinder Sliver** backed by a **Sedge Sliver**, but I turn things around with a **Sulfurous Blast** that takes out his two smaller guys. I get down **Rift Elemental** and use it to power down a **Greater Gargadon**, taking out a **Cautery Sliver** (he only has one black mana available and uses it to regenerate his **Sedge Sliver** after I block). I get a swing with the Gargadon and drop another **Rift Elemental** while at 5 life. He swings into my guy, and then drops another **Cautery Sliver**. I have three lands in play, and am holding a **Sulfurous Blast**. Unfortunately, I have no way to win this game even if I draw a fourth land. Let's go over the scenarios:

Him: **Swamp**, **Plains** untapped. Tapped **Sedge Sliver**, untapped **Cautery Sliver**. 8 life.

Me: **Greater Gargadon** untapped, **Sulfurous Blast** in hand. 5 life.

Scenario One: I attack with the Gargadon. He blocks and regenerates. I play **Sulfurous Blast** after the attack (brings me to 2 life). He uses his last mana to have **Cautery Sliver** prevent one damage from **Sulfurous Blast** to his **Sedge Sliver**, untaps, and kills me.

Scenario Two: I play **Sulfurous Blast** before the attack. He sacrifices **Cautery Sliver** and **Sedge Sliver** to deal 2 damage to me and kills me.

Scenario Three: I hold back to block. He swings with both guys, deals 3 to me, and then shoots both at me to kill me.

Record: 4-4

Game 9: mrnotperfect (White Weenie)

He gets **Blade of the Sixth Pride** and double **Aven Riftwatcher**. I get Jhoira (finally!), suspend double Gargadon and **Deep-Sea Kraken**, and swing for 26 damage on turn seven. He dies a turn later.

Record: 5-4

Game 10: Darkwhizkid (R/B Spellshapers)

He gets **Undertaker**, **Urborg Syphon-Mage** and **Flowstone Channeler**. I wipe out his board with **Sulfurous Blast**, and then drop down **Aeon Chronicler** with an impending **Greater Gargadon**. This draws a concession.

Record: 6-4

Riddle of Lightning, while it looks nice on paper, just doesn't work well in this deck. It's always sitting there, clogging up my hand and making me wish it were anything else. That's a good sign that a card needs to go—every time you draw it, you wish it weren't there!

In order to get more offense into the deck, I pick up a pair of **Akroma, Angel of Fury**. Akroma fills two important holes in the deck—it gives me another turn-three play to power the offense, and it works great as a suspend card via Jhoira—it will come into play unmorphed. Akromas are only running a deuce each in the **Magic Online** marketplace, so they are a perfect fit for a budget deck like this one.

Out: 2 **Riddle of Lightning**, 1 **Deep-Sea Kraken** (24 Tickets)

In: 1 **Think Twice**, 2 **Akroma, Angel of Fury** (28 Tickets)



Jhoira Goes Up 4		
Main Deck 60 cards		
11 Island	3 Aeon Chronicler	3 Cancel
10 Mountain	2 Akroma, Angel of Fury	4 Prismatic Lens
4 Terramorphic Expanse	2 Deep-Sea Kraken	3 Rift Bolt
25 lands	3 Greater Gargadon	3 Sulfurous Blast
	4 Jhoira of the Ghitu	4 Think Twice
	4 Rift Elemental	17 other spells
	18 creatures	

Between games with my Jhoira block deck, I've had a ton of fun playing Vanguard games with the Jhoira avatar! Here's what I've been using:

Jhoira Basic	
Main Deck 60 cards	
10 Forest	0 other spells
10 Island	



The Jhoira Avatar is running only 2 tickets each right now from most people, so I would suggest picking it up now—it's a ton of fun running a game where you sling sorceries and instants back and forth! Here's some tips that I've gotten so far from playing a few Jhoira games:

1. You almost always want to go with the sorcery option. They tend to be more powerful, and there are several sorceries that can almost outright win the game (*Wit's End*, *Crush of Wurms*), whereas instants are best saved for digging for a desperation *Counterspell* against your opponent's game-ending sorcery.
2. You want to work up to six mana (for two sorceries a turn) in most games, and then sit there. If you end up with a few card-drawing spells (*Concentrate*, *Harmonize*), head for nine so you can drop three spells a turn.
3. Land destruction/denial is key in this format. There are a ton of *Stone Rain* variants, and cards such as *Temporal Spring* work just as well for denying your opponent mana. Unless someone gets a huge early creature with a lucky sorcery, the name of the game is mana and card advantage.
4. The correct configuration of lands for your deck, as I've found, is 20 *Swamp*, 10 *Plains*, 10 *Mountain*, 10 *Forest*, and 10 *Island*. You want to be able to take advantage of Domain spells such as *Tribal Flames* or *Allied Strategies*. You also need to acknowledge that black has the most "land-type" matters sorceries out there, such as *Corrupt* or *Mind Sludge*.
5. If you get the option to put down a creature early, even if it's a Chatter of Squirrel token, take it (unless there a *much* better option available). This opens the door for a quick win with *Biorhythm*, because there aren't many quick wins in this format otherwise!
6. If you pull up three stinkers with your Jhoira pull, you don't have to choose any of them! Simply click "Cancel" and all three choices will be discarded, and you will do nothing for that spell. It's better to swing and miss than to *Pyroclasm* away your own *Grizzly Fate* tokens. (Yes, I did this before the cancel button was brought to my attention).

See you all next week for the results of the dredge contest! Until then a poll:

CHOOSE!

Intet, the Dreamer!
 Numot, the Devastator!
 Oros, the Avenger!
 Teneb, the Harvester!
 Vorosh, the Hunter!
 I CHOOSE ALL OF THEM! DRAGON WARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR!

*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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