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# The Long Walk Home

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Limited Information  
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

It sure is good to be back home. To have a bed to call your own, and not have to rush every morning for fear of checkout time and the endless hours of journeying that awaits you. It also means I have my faithful computer back and with it, **Magic Online**. After a wait to download the update it was time for my first draft in months, excluding a victorious three versus three in Florence (Tiago Chan, Gabriel Nassif, and myself against Shouta Yasooka, Tomoharu Saito, and Shuhei Nakamura). I've had many requests for a triple *Tenth* draft, and when I logged into **Magic Online**, there were seven people handily waiting in the 8-4 queue. It was meant to be.

## Pack 1, Pick 1

Severed Legion, Bandage, Rootwater Commando, Bloodrock Cyclops, Rushwood Dryad, Dusk Imp, Firebreathing, Treetop Bracers, Vampire Bats, Stronghold Discipline, Fountain of Youth, Diabolic Tutor, Ascendant Evincar, Island, Swamp



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This was a fairly nice and easy pick to start the draft off with. Normally **Diabolic Tutor** is a very high pick because it fetches the best card in your deck, effectively duplicating it, which is a phenomenally powerful effect in a format so easily dominated by bombs such as this one. However, there is an **Ascendant Evincar** in the booster, and much like his more recent upgrade in **Crovax**, **Ascendant Hero**, he is a bomb. He flies and will easily finish off your opponent by himself, pumps all your other black creatures, kills little guys, and buys you plenty of time to win the race. It is unfortunate that this pack is so heavy in black; it wouldn't be a huge step of the imagination to think that the next three picks out of this pack will also be black. This is especially annoying as the Evincar wants as the deck to be heavy black and to have as few opponents in black as possible.

Pick: **Ascendant Evincar**

## Pack 1, Pick 2

Uncontrollable Anger, Looming Shade, Giant Spider, Wild Griffin, Remove Soul, Fists of the Anvil, Holy Day, Pincher Beetles, Horseshoe Crab, Naturalize, Whispersilk Cloak, Aura of Silence, Sculpting Steel, Mountain

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This pick comes down to **Giant Spider** or **Remove Soul**. I think the Spider is a stronger card for its colour, but I think these cards are tremendously close in power as the **Remove Soul** deals with many bombs for a relatively cheap price. Added to this the fact that I prefer blue to green in this format, and we see why I pick the Soul. This is a controversial pick as the Spider is probably the stronger card, but I still do not know the format that well yet. What I do know is that blue is the best colour and if the format has changed little from its *Ninth* predecessor, then I still want to "force" blue if presented with a pick that is close in power.

Pick: **Remove Soul**

## Pack 1, Pick 3

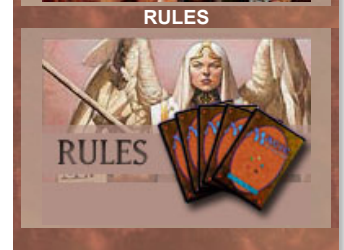
Rock Badger, Unsummon, Ravenous Rats, Giant Spider, Ghost Warden, Raging Goblin, Skyshroud Ranger, Peek, Knight of Dusk, Chromatic Star, Aura Graft, Plains, Sudden Impact

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I'm not sure I made the correct pick this pack, looking back in hindsight. The pick is between **Unsummon**, **Giant Spider** and **Knight of Dusk**. There are good reasons for each candidate. The **Unsummon** is a great card and will follow the **Remove Soul** and stay relatively on colour. The **Giant Spider** is once again probably the most powerful card in the pack and had I picked it last time I would have no problem picking it now. **Knight of Dusk** is a relatively unknown quantity for me, he seems like a pretty much unblockable monster that can get bogged down in the late game but that attrition seems fine too. He seems the weaker of the three cards but I picked him for a few reasons.

I think that *Tenth* is a format where signals matter slightly less than usual because it is often determined by the strength of your bombs and, in my opinion, on the power of blue cards (read card advantage and evasion). What this all means is that I feel a need to try and keep my Evincar as playable as possible because he is that good. I

## Update on Rain Delay



like the cards in black and feel I want to try and cut the colour off as much as possible and have as many black guys to make the Evincar even stronger when he arrives (a minor reason). I also want to experiment with partially forcing in a format where I think it is possible to do so, but only hand in hand with at least some support from signalling. It would, for example, be unwise to force either white or red here as I have seen absolutely no evidence to support this idea.


In hindsight, I feel I should have taken the **Unsummon** because it keeps me in blue, is the more powerful card (than the Knight), and does not attach me so firmly to the Evincar.

Pick: **Knight of Dusk**

#### **Pack 1, Pick 4**

**Festering Goblin, Craw Wurm, Aven Cloudchaser, Counsel of the Soratami, Scathe Zombies, Goblin Elite Infantry, Overgrowth, Tundra Wolves, Sky Weaver, Knight of Dusk, Luminesce, Swamp**

Click [here](#).

**Sky Weaver, Knight of Dusk** or **Craw Wurm**. Had I picked the first Spider, the **Craw Wurm** would be an easy pick, whereas now he makes it seem like maybe I should have been green all along. If this were *Time Spiral* Block draft, I think I would pick him now as he is by far the strongest signal. However, I appear to have trapped myself in the experimental forcing frame of mind. The Wurm can still fit the bill as I can abandon the blue and go green instead. I think **Sky Weaver** is a fairly weak card by itself because it does little other than make you pay a lot of mana each turn to give other guys flying (not the strongest ability, : Your other coloured creature gains flying) and I am not yet invested in blue.

However, I shall pick the second Knight and invest myself further into black. I pick this over the Wurm for a couple of reasons. I want to be deep in the colour, I do not know what other colour I will be, but if I stay deep in black I will make this pick a playable for sure. Maybe the Knight is good. He seems comparable to **Severed Legion**, so he isn't that good, but I'm enjoying being black right now.

Pick: **Knight of Dusk**

#### **Pack 1, Pick 5**

**Youthful Knight, Aven Fisher, Aggressive Urge, Fear, Cancel, Firebreathing, Suntail Hawk, High Ground, Wurm's Tooth, Icatian Priest, Plains**

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This is the signal that I was looking for to find my second colour because I was suspecting I was going to have to dip into green, which would have been awkward this late after passing so many great cards. Even better, the colour I'm being shipped is blue. I wasn't too sure about this pick, especially as I rated **Aven Fisher** above **Cancel** in my provisional pick order a few weeks back. As I stared at the two cards, it came to me how important bombs and dealing with them are, and my mouse hovered over the **Cancel** and clicked with a will of its own. Much as I love the Fisher, I'm pretty certain **Cancel** is the correct pick, especially in blue-black. **Cancel** is so powerful in this format, much like it is in 2HG and for similar reasons—that games tend to come down to the last unanswered bomb and **Cancel** deals with everything. I think it is better in blue-black, because discard lets you control what is going on in the early game and countermagic nails the coffin shut when discard's job is done.

Pick: **Cancel**

#### **Pack 1, Pick 6**

**Bogardan Firefiend, Smash, Wall of Wood, Shimmering Wings, Angelic Blessing, Spineless Thug, Fog Elemental, Agonizing Memories, Flamewave Invoker, Plains**

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**Fog Elemental** is a perfectly reasonable card in blue-black, where you are lacking sizeable creatures and have plenty of evasion guys that want to race. However, it is no **Agonizing Memories**. Its first plus point is that it is card advantage. Secondly, the information it gives you is huge, as you know everything that is going to go on for the next two turns. Its third effect is far more subtle. Not only can it bury a card away for two turns so you can figure out how to deal with it when you want to, but if your opponent is missing a crucial land drop, then the Memories will **Time Walk** him for two turns! Or keep a bomb away for just as long.

Pick: **Agonizing Memories**

#### **Pack 1, Pick 7**

**Viashino Runner, Treetop Bracers, Vampire Bats, Smash, Wall of Wood, Reminisce, Agonizing Memories, Sleeper Agent, Forest**

Pick: **Agonizing Memories**

#### **Pack 1, Pick 8**

**Reviving Dose, Dross Crocodile, Viashino Sandscout, Cloud Sprite, Distress, Forbidding Watchtower, No Rest for the Wicked, Mountain**

Pick: **Distress**

#### **Pack 1, Pick 9**

Rootwater Commando, Firebreathing, Treetop Bracers, Vampire Bats, Stronghold Discipline, Island, Swamp

Pick: Rootwater Commando

### Pack 1, Pick 10

Uncontrollable Anger, Holy Day, Horseshoe Crab, Naturalize, Aura of Silence, Mountain

Pick: Uncontrollable Anger

### Pack 1, Pick 11

Raging Goblin, Skyshroud Ranger, Aura Graft, Plains, Sudden Impact

Pick: Aura Graft

### Pack 1, Pick 12

Goblin Elite Infantry, Tundra Wolves, Luminesce, Swamp

Pick: Goblin Elite Infantry

### Pack 1, Pick 13

Firebreathing, High Ground, Plains

Pick: Plains

### Pack 1, Pick 14

Shimmering Wings, Plains

Pick: Shimmering Wings

### Pack 1, Pick 15

Forest

The first pack worked out nicely. I was worried we would have to switch into green late, but it never came. Instead, I was rewarded with some great late pick cards in my colours, reinforcing the fact that I was in the correct place. Although I have no removal as of yet, I am assembling a great control package thanks to **Remove Soul**, **Cancel**, **Distress**, and two **Agonizing Memories**, and if I can get my hands on some the board removal (like the **Unsummon** I should have picked third), then the deck will be great. So for now I am, unsurprisingly, looking for removal and card advantage. Some defence wouldn't go amiss, but for now, given the nature of blue-black and its high number of evasive creatures, my focus is on removal.

## Pack 2, Pick 1

Highway Robber, Skyhunter Patrol, Viashino Runner, Civic Wayfinder, Grizzly Bears, Stun, Elvish Berserker, Fear, Cancel, Viridian Shaman, Kraken's Eye, Phantom Warrior, Troll Ascetic, Mountain, Forest

Click [here](#).

**Cancel**, **Phantom Warrior** or **Highway Robbers**. The Robber is fairly easy to discount as it simply isn't as powerful as the other two cards and I have none of the graveyard recursion that black is known for that augment it. This leaves me with what I now think is a close choice between the heavy blue cards. I went with the **Phantom Warrior** as he is as unblockable as they come, but whereas instinct swerved my hand in the last **Cancel** pick, past card experience kept it in bay here. Upon reflection, given how great **Cancel** was during the games (and how great a draw I felt it would be, even if I never drew it), I think that **Cancel** is the correct pick here. There are many evasion creatures that the Warrior can be replaced by, but **Cancel** is really good and in high demand. From a more experienced viewpoint, I made the incorrect pick.

Pick: Phantom Warrior



### Pack 2, Pick 2

Snapping Drake, Skyhunter Prowler, Recover, Giant Growth, Steadfast Guard, Peek, Unholy Strength, Raging Goblin, Honor Guard, Overgrowth, Wall of Air, Sudden Impact, Seismic Assault, Forest

Click [here](#).

**Recover** is my first shot at the recursion engine and as such should not be valued to highly as the engine is now far less likely to come together with one pack already out of the way. The **Wall of Air** is the defence I was talking about in the first intermission, and is sorely needed. Two things kept me from picking it though. The first is that this deck is going to have mana difficulties; it cannot curve out with **Distress** and **Cancel** for example, and has

many double costed cards in both colours. However, the main reason is that **Snapping Drake** is simply a far better card, and I am more likely to win games by racing with my evasion guys than I am from hiding behind this wall.

Pick: **Snapping Drake**

#### **Pack 2, Pick 3**

Aven Cloudchaser, Prodigal Pyromancer, Unsummon, Stalking Tiger, Samite Healer, Lumengrid Warden, Holy Day, Duct Crawler, Naturalize, Serra's Embrace, Shatterstorm, Pariah, Island

Pick: Unsummon

#### **Pack 2, Pick 4**

Benalish Knight, Sea Monster, Bloodrock Cyclops, Dusk Imp, Smash, Holy Strength, Fugitive Wizard, Canopy Spider, Sudden Impact, Regeneration, Gaea's Herald, Forest

Pick: Dusk Imp

#### **Pack 2, Pick 5**

Wild Griffin, Anaba Bodyguard, Ravenous Rats, Cloud Sprite, Terramorphic Expanse, Plague Beetle, Pincher Beetles, Wall of Fire, Evacuation, Island, Mountain

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It should be noted that I am not the biggest fan of **Ravenous Rats** in Limited; I am less of a fan of **Evacuation**, though. This card is seldom playable and might only be in the extreme example of a deck where every creature had a comes-into-play effect, or possibly a **Millstone** deck. It is too symmetrical because it cannot be exploited, like **Wrath of God** can be, by overextension or careful resource management.

Pick: **Ravenous Rats**

#### **Pack 2, Pick 6**

Heart of Light, Hill Giant, Goblin Piker, Holy Strength, Grizzly Bears, Stun, Elvish Berserker, Angel's Feather, Relentless Rats, Forest

Pick: Hill Giant

#### **Pack 2, Pick 7**

Merfolk Looter, Hill Giant, Venerable Monk, Fugitive Wizard, Contaminated Bond, Goblin Piker, Telling Time, Megrin, Forest

Pick: Merfolk Looter

#### **Pack 2, Pick 8**

Rock Badger, Skyhunter Prowler, Sift, Crafty Pathmage, Llanowar Sentinel, Goblin Elite Infantry, Elvish Champion, Mountain

Pick: Sift

#### **Pack 2, Pick 9**

Grizzly Bears, Stun, Elvish Berserker, Fear, Kraken's Eye, Mountain, Forest

Pick: Stun

#### **Pack 2, Pick 10**

Steadfast Guard, Peek, Raging Goblin, Honor Guard, Sudden Impact, Forest

Pick: Peek

#### **Pack 2, Pick 11**

Aven Cloudchaser, Holy Day, Duct Crawler, Shatterstorm, Island

Pick: Aven Cloudchaser

#### **Pack 2, Pick 12**

Smash, Fugitive Wizard, Regeneration, Forest

Pick: Smash

#### **Pack 2, Pick 13**

Plague Beetle, Island, Mountain

Pick: Plague Beetle

## Pack 2, Pick 14

Heart of Light, Goblin Piker

Pick: Heart of Light

## Pack 2, Pick 15

Forest

Wow, did that pack suck! It was pretty light on playables for all colours, but still. Out of nowhere, I received the late pick gifts of **Merfolk Looter** and **Sift**, meaning that the deck need not go out of its way for card advantage anymore. The card advantage and evasion quotas are now reasonably filled and all we really need is some removal and defence.

## Pack 3, Pick 1

Craw Wurm, Terror, Samite Healer, Stalking Tiger, Remove Soul, Scathe Zombies, Demolish, Warrior's Honor, Commune with Nature, Crafty Pathmage, Icatian Priest, Air Elemental, Academy Researchers, Rootwater Matriarch, Swamp

Click [here](#).

**Terror** is better than **Remove Soul**, so that can be discounted, which brings us to the classic pick between **Terror** and **Air Elemental**. Given how lacking the deck is of removal, it seems like it should be a simple pick. However, **Air Elemental** is just such a bomb that I cannot warrant picking **Terror** over it. It dominates almost every other flyer in the format and wins the game very quickly. Any game where I curve out reasonably well with a few flyers and finish off the curve with this monstrosity is already close to over.



Pick: Air Elemental

## Pack 3, Pick 2

Phyrexian Rager, Aggressive Urge, Loxodon Mystic, Boomerang, Llanowar Elves, Severed Legion, Angelic Blessing, Spineless Thug, Lava Axe, Natural Spring, Telepathy, Treasure Hunter, Thundering Giant, Plains

Click [here](#).

Although **Boomerang** is pseudo-removal, it is not better than **Phyrexian Rager**. **Severed Legion** is great, but I already have plenty of evasion and I don't really want to add yet another double costed creature to the mix. The Rager is everything I want, providing an early guy that I don't mind throwing in front of any early pressure or risking in a double block.

Pick: Phyrexian Rager

## Pack 3, Pick 3

Ghost Warden, Prodigal Pyromancer, Twitch, Kavu Climber, Festering Goblin, Demolish, Cloud Sprite, Terramorphic Expanse, Plague Beetle, Pincher Beetles, Icatian Priest, Steel Golem, Island

Click [here](#).

This is a pretty poor pack for me as a third pick. This was a really close pick, and I'm not sure which option is correct. It is between either **Steel Golem** or **Terramorphic Expanse**. The Expanse helps relieve the mana burden of the deck a little, whereas the Golem is a massive creature for his cost. I can definitely see games where I cast a flyer on turns three and four and then Golem and **Distress / Remove Soul** on the fifth turn to seal the game up right there. I picked the Golem because I need to know how good he is. This is one of the few decks, a controlling evasion deck, where he might be playable, and I want to find out how good he is. In the end, he didn't make the final cut, so I will have to find out another time.

Pick: Steel Golem

## Pack 3, Pick 4

Anaba Bodyguard, Steadfast Guard, Assassinate, Cloud Elemental, Uncontrollable Anger, Dross Crocodile, Fists of the Anvil, Tundra Wolves, Llanowar Sentinel, Relentless Rats, Skyhunter Skirmisher, Mountain

Click [here](#).

Much as I adore **Cloud Elemental**, **Assassinate** kills something.

Pick: Assassinate

## Pack 3, Pick 5

Aven Fisher, Rushwood Dryad, Lightning Elemental, Heart of Light, Angelic Wall, Mind Rot, Smash, Holy Strength, Angel's Feather, Plagiarize, Swamp

Pick: Aven Fisher

**Pack 3, Pick 6**

Bandage, Sea Monster, Mass of Ghouls, Lava Axe, Natural Spring, Fugitive Wizard, Wall of Wood, Primal Rage, Thundering Giant, Mountain

Pick: Mass of Ghouls

**Pack 3, Pick 7**

Lightning Elemental, Youthful Knight, Fugitive Wizard, Wall of Wood, Angelic Wall, Mind Rot, Sylvan Scrying, Sky Weaver, Plains

Click [here](#).

I'm still not a fan of the *Sky Weaver*, especially as most of my black creatures have evasion anyway. He's not bad for early defence but is quickly outclassed. Maybe I should have picked him as several of my games were won by racing, but I went with the more controlling *Mind Rot*, as their last two cards are normally very good. I even played it alongside *Distress* and two *Agonizing Memories*. This was a difficult decision and can go with play style as much as anything else. I was happy with my choice, though, and think it was the better of the two.

Pick: Mind Rot

**Pack 3, Pick 8**

Festering Goblin, Counsel of the Soratami, Scathe Zombies, Goblin Elite Infantry, Overgrowth, Flamewave Invoker, Forest, Spellbook

Click [here](#).

I'm just not that big a fan of *Festering Goblin*. It doesn't kill enough creatures. It almost never ever gets a two for one and in rare cases will even kill one of your own guys (if this happens, then you probably misplayed). It just doesn't have a big impact on the game and as much as I love early defence, this just doesn't cut the mustard in *Tenth*. *Counsel of the Soratami* says draw cards.

Pick: Counsel of the Soratami

**Pack 3, Pick 9**

Samite Healer, Scathe Zombies, Crafty Pathmage, Icatian Priest, Academy Researchers, Rootwater Matriarch, Swamp

Pick: Rootwater Matriarch

**Pack 3, Pick 10**

Boomerang, Spineless Thug, Natural Spring, Telepathy, Treasure Hunter, Plains

Pick: Boomerang

**Pack 3, Pick 11**

Twitch, Cloud Sprite, Plague Beetle, Icatian Priest, Island

Pick: Icatian Priest

**Pack 3, Pick 12**

Uncontrollable Anger, Dross Crocodile, Fists of the Anvil, Mountain

Pick: Dross Crocodile

**Pack 3, Pick 13**

Angelic Wall, Angel's Feather, Swamp

Pick: Angelic Wall

**Pack 3, Pick 14**

Fugitive Wizard, Mountain

Pick: Fugitive Wizard

**Pack 3, Pick 15**

Plains



Tenth Edition Draft Deck		Sideboard
<b>Main Deck</b> 40 cards		
8 Island	1 Peek	1 Angelic Wall
9 Swamp	1 Unsummon	1 Aura Graft
17 lands		1 Aven Cloudchaser
	1 Boomerang	1 Dross Crocodile
	1 Distress	2 Forest
	1 Remove Soul	1 Fugitive Wizard
1 Merfolk Looter	1 Counsel of the Soratami	1 Goblin Elite Infantry
1 Dusk Imp	1 Mind Rot	1 Heart of Light
2 Knight of Dusk	1 Assassinate	1 Hill Giant
1 Phantom Warrior	1 Cancel	1 Icatian Priest
1 Phyrexian Rager	2 Agonizing Memories	2 Island
1 Aven Fisher	1 Sift	1 Plague Beetle
1 Snapping Drake	12 other spells	2 Plains
1 Air Elemental		1 Ravenous Rats
1 Mass of Ghouls		1 Rootwater Commando
1 Ascendant Evincar		1 Rootwater Matriarch
11 creatures		1 Shimmering Wings
		1 Smash
		1 Steel Golem
		1 Stun
		1 Uncontrollable Anger
		24 sideboard cards

The deck wound up being reasonably solid but far from spectacular. It has a couple of bombs in **Air Elemental** and **Ascendant Evincar** and several controlling cards that should be able to get me out of most situations and enough card advantage to ensure I shouldn't fall too far behind. I am worried that I might lose to a big green deck backed up by some early removal, but hopefully I have enough flyers and bounce to out tempo to victory. As the format is still relatively new to me, here is a recap of what happened in my matches.

## Round 1, Game 1

He started with just **Mountains**, and the first play of the game is my **Dusk Imp**, which I followed up with an **Agonizing Memories**. It buried his four-drop, leaving him with nothing to do for the turn. By the time he played it and played **Arcane Teachings** on it to kill the **Merfolk Looter** I had played in the meantime, he was too far behind. I looted into an **Unsummon** to deal with the Aura and set him further back and a **Snapping Drake** joined my **Dusk Imp**. I had a **Remove Soul** for his first critter and **Counsel of the Soratami**-ed into a **Cancel** in case any trouble spell was forthcoming. Nothing came, and he succumbed to my flyers.

## Round 1, Game 2

He leads with a **Ravenous Rats**, I **Peek** in response and figure out what to discard. A **Flamewave Invoker** and a **Phyrexian Rager** stare each other off, whilst in the air a **Snapping Drake** trades with his Hypnotic Spectre. A **Mind Rot** takes his last two cards, leaving him in trouble. He topdecks **Stun** to let his dorks get through to drop me to 12 and draws another land getting him closer to Invoker mana. My fresh Looter finally gets me to **Air Elemental** mana. The big flyer holds the ground for a turn before becoming the clock. Random dorks fill up the ground, whilst the Elemental swings unimpeded through the skies. Thanks to Looter, I set up an **Unsummon** and a **Remove Soul** to take care of the Invoker when he finally gets to eight mana. The **Ascendant Evincar** shows up to seal the game.

On his last turn, he attacks me with a freshly played **Thundering Giant**. I can block and trade with the Evincar, but that would mean my attack back wouldn't be lethal, or I could fall to 2 and die if he has burn in his hand. I figure out that he cannot have a burn spell; otherwise he would have killed my blocker last turn or **Shocked** my **Phyrexian Rager** before it got pumped by the Evincar. He doesn't have the mana for **Lava Axe**, so I safely take the damage, untap, and win. He had a nice deck featuring **Loxodon Warhammer** and Hypnotic Spectre amongst other goodies, but I stayed ahead throughout thanks to some early tempo and then late game card advantage backed up by discard and countermagic to make sure I stayed ahead.



## Round 2, Game 1

On the play, I **Boomeranged** his first land for tempo, and then played **Agonizing Memories** on him. He had only two land, and the Memories double **Time Walked** him. He **Incinerated** my early threat, but I made an assortment of flyers and **Remove Souled** his first creature, meaning he could never race.

## Round 2, Game 2

He led with a **Venerable Monk**, which I **Remove Souled** as my mana would be busy with flyers for the next few turns. **Dusk Imp** and **Snapping Drake** traded blows with an **Aven Cloudchaser** and an **Earth Elemental** for a while. I hit him with **Agonizing Memories** to ensure that I would win the race unless he topped a removal off of his first new draw. He obviously did and won off a **Fists of the Anvil** that I knew he had all along.

### Round 2, Game 3

He stuck on two land behind an **Angelic Wall** and **Incinerated** my first threat. I made an endless stream of flyers and **Remove Soul** a **Wild Griffin** that he mustered in defence. I finally reached five mana after missing a land drop and laid an **Air Elemental** followed by the **Evincar**. He got an **Icy Manipulator** and then a **Venerable Monk**, but he was too late recovering from his screw. I **Mind Rotted** him, snagging a **Siege-Gang Commander** and a **Hill Giant** out of his hand, which left him with a **Spitting Earth** (which I knew because I had **Peeked** him), but he died because the pressure was too much.

### Round 3, Game 1

He led with an **Elvish Berserker**, I with **Phantom Warrior**. He then played **Venerable Monk**. My board was the **Phantom**, three **Islands**, and a **Swamp**. My hand was **Mass of Ghouls**, **Distress**, **Boomerang**, **Remove Soul**, and an **Island**. He attacked, and I made a mistake by bouncing the **Monk**. I figured to stay alive until I could draw my second **Swamp**. He then re-played the **Monk** as he had no better play, and I let it resolve. I topdecked an **Air Elemental**. He made a **Spined Wurm**. I then drew **Ascendant Evincar** and **Knight of Dusk**.

**Phantom Warrior** kept attacking, as the **Air Elemental** stared at the **Spined Wurm**. He was unwilling to trade (for some reason). He played **Angelic Blessing** on the **Wurm**, and I fell to 9. He made a second **Monk**, which I had to **Remove Soul**, as I was getting too low. I drew **Phyrexian Rager** and drew into **Mind Rot**; I still had no second **Swamp**. He made a **Tundra wolves** and another **Elvish Berserker**. I got a second **Swamp** on turn nine, and the **Evincar** killed three of his guys. After that he had no chance, as I started playing all the gas that had been colour-screwed up in my hand.

### Round 3, Game 2

He drew a **Troll Ascetic** the turn I played a **Dusk Imp** (I couldn't use the **Remove Soul** in hand). Next turn I decided to commit to another flyer rather than sit back on **Soul** and **Cancel**, and he played **Serra's Embrace** on the **Troll**! He didn't play another spell other than a **Fountain of Youth**(!), and I couldn't draw a non-existent answer.

### Round 3, Game 3

I laid six **Swamps** in a row, having kept a **Merfolk Looter**, **Evincar**, **Assassinate**, **Air Elemental**, three **Swamp** hand. His first guy was a **Pincer beetle** (which I could not **Assassinate**), then **Tundra wolves** and an **Icatian Priest**. He played two **Terramorphic Expanse** and couldn't play a **Spined Wurm** on his fifth turn because of it. The **Evincar** finally showed up and wrathed his team. He played a **Hunted Wumpus**, letting me make the **Air Elemental** (still with no **Islands** in sight), and I **Mind Rotted** his hand. We started to race, his **Wumpus** got **Assassinated**, and then we both flooded. His **Spined Wurm** wasn't enough to win versus my two flyers, as I drew a chump blocker. His last turn **Recollect** had nothing worth returning, and he died.

My first and second round opponents' decks were both very good, but they couldn't beat my deck's tempo / evasion start backed up by counters, discard, and card advantage in the late game. **Cancel**, **Remove Soul** and **Agonizing Memories** turned out to be MVPs.

Till next week,

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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