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# One Last Time

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*Limited Information*  
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

**L**orwyn hit the streets a few days ago, but as I write this it's still not available. A sad thing occurs when a new set comes in, and that's that we lose the old set that rotates out. Sometimes we're happy to see it go, maybe because we could never get to grips with it, or maybe it was just flawed or we had drafted it too many times. I decided that this week, I would bring you a farewell to *Time Spiral* Block.

I'm aware that many people think I draft almost exclusively blue. This is true whenever it is available, and I will talk about why in a later article. So for my last article, I tried really hard to not draft blue. I wanted to bring you guys something cool. For my first draft I forced Slivers from a first-pick *Gemhide Sliver*—it didn't work out. Then I drafted a sick nearly mono-blue control deck featuring two *Foresee*, a *Careful Consideration*, a *Fathom Seer*, a *Mystical Teachings*, and a *Cryptic Annelid*. It splashed black, red and green for various bombs and removal and its mana was fantastic thanks to a *Terramorphic Expanse*, a *Prismatic Lens*, and a *Dreamscape Artist* (a card I still don't like as much as everyone else). Alas, when I went to write about it, I found that the draft file had corrupted and it was not to be.

I went back to the drawing board, still trying to come up with a fun draft deck that didn't involve blue, which I was determined to try really hard to not draft. However, one of the problems with **Magic**, in my opinion, is that it is very hard to have "fun" without blue or black. They're the tricky colours that let you do degenerate things, things other than just tapping men sideways. Anyhow, here's how it all worked out when I hit a 4-3-2-2 queue.

Final Wrap-up  
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## Pack 1, Pick 1

Deathspore Thallid, Errant Ephemeron, Flowstone Channeler, Herd Gnarr, Trespasser *il-Vec*, Amrou Scout, Two-Headed Sliver, Clockspinning, Sidewinder Sliver, Fungal Reaches, Krosan Grip, Voidmage Husher, Kher Keep, Dandân, Mountain

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Once more, we're faced with the classic opening pick of *Errant Ephemeron* versus *Strangling Soot*. I've voiced where I stand about this pick and it was especially relevant a few weeks back when I was drafting with Richard Hoaen. Despite my intention to avoid blue, our first pick has thrust it upon me and I shall meekly (and happily) consent.

Pick: *Errant Ephemeron*



## Pack 1, Pick 2

Grapeshot, Scarwood Treefolk, Slipstream Serpent, Gaze of Justice, *Strangling Soot*, Viscid Lemures, Mwonvuli Acid-Moss, Two-Headed Sliver, Blazing Blade Askari, Shadow Sliver, Smallpox, Fool's Demise, Magus of the Mirror, Withered Wretch

Click [here](#).

A quick check through the pack reveals that an uncommon is missing from the pack, which is helpful to know because it would've been awkward if the person on the right had picked an *Errant Ephemeron* here and would then be cutting our blue. Nothing is even vaguely close in power to the *Strangling Soot*, so we snap it up and are already on our way to some kind of tricky deck because we're in the right colours.

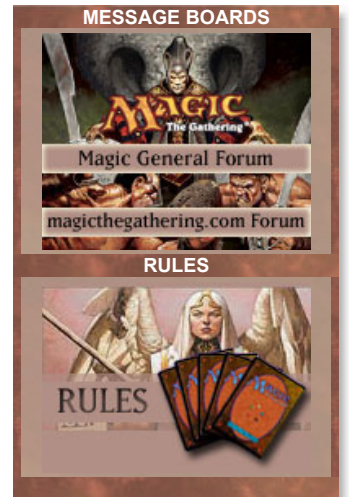
Pick: *Strangling Soot*

## Pack 1, Pick 3

Gaze of Justice, Coal Stoker, Durkwood Baloth, Coral Trickster, Ivory Giant, Bogardan Rager, Sangrophage, D'Avenant Healer, Wormwood Dryad, *Mystical Teachings*, Barbed Shocker, Duskrider Peregrine, Conspiracy

Click [here](#).

This pack is a lot more open. The first thing that came to mind following my first two picks and my desire to do something quirky was to take the *Mystical Teachings* and never look back. However, it is still too early to be doing something foolish with our picks as we are still not sure of our colours. We can take the semi-on-colour cards of either *Coal Stoker* or *Coral Trickster*, but they will limit out options if the signals swing away from our early picks, as they so often do. This means that we have the choice between *Duskrider Peregrine* and *Durkwood Baloth*. I



think this is a very close pick as both are tremendous creatures. It's hard to say which is the better, but we do know that green is the better colour (in part because it has some pseudo-blue cards...), so I opt for the fattie.

Pick: [Durkwood Baloth](#)

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

[Terramorphic Expanse](#), [Snapback](#), [Pentarch Ward](#), [Bonesplitter Sliver](#), [Jhoira's Timebug](#), [Jedit's Dragoons](#), [Savage Thallid](#), [Ancient Grudge](#), [Sudden Shock](#), [Thunder Totem](#), [Tectonic Fiend](#), [Trickbind](#)

Click [here](#).

It doesn't get much trickier than [Trickbind](#). I would pick [Trickbind](#) over [Snapback](#) and, especially for this final draft, over [Terramorphic Expanse](#). However, there is still a late [Sudden Shock](#) in the pack and it would be rude to overlook something like that. It is still too early to say that this is a rock-solid signal, but it would be accurate to say that this gave one of those warm feelings like when you see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Pick: [Sudden Shock](#)

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

[Think Twice](#), [Ashcoat Bear](#), [Cloudchaser Kestrel](#), [Thallid Germinator](#), [Pit Keeper](#), [Sage of Epityr](#), [Divine Congregation](#), [Mindlash Sliver](#), [Vampiric Sliver](#), [Gustcloak Cavalier](#), [Defiant Vanguard](#)

Click [here](#).

Well, isn't this a big pile of mediocre drivel all in the wrong colours. The white cards are fairly decent, but we have also passed a fair bit of good white ([Amrou Scout](#) and [Duskriders Peregrine](#)) and if you go white, you really want to get good cards in [Planar Chaos](#). This narrows our pick down to [Vampiric Sliver](#), [Thallid Germinator](#), and [Think Twice](#). Looking back on this pick, there's no real reason to take the [Think Twice](#) as we have seen fairly few blue cards since the [Ephemeron](#). [Vampiric Sliver](#) would echo the Soot, but again, not much black has flowed since, which would suggest that the Germinator was the correct pick. However, I wanted to be tricky and [Think Twice](#) has always been a favourite of mine. I made the wrong pick, doubtless much to the angst of all the people in the forums who chastise me for playing blue too often.

Pick: [Think Twice](#)

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

[Cancel](#), [Icatian Crier](#), [Sage of Epityr](#), [Ghitu Firebreathing](#), [Greenseeker](#), [Thick-Skinned Goblin](#), [Ghostflame Sliver](#), [Dementia Sliver](#), [Academy Ruins](#), [Dodecapod](#)

Click [here](#).

It's getting fairly mediocre fairly quickly. [Cancel](#) and [Thick-Skinned Goblin](#) are both reasonable options, but I feel that this deck might well become a train wreck if I don't sort out my colours quickly, so I take the neutral [Dodecapod](#) to guarantee me a playable at the end of the day.

Pick: [Dodecapod](#)

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

[Flamecore Elemental](#), [Feebleness](#), [Ophidian Eye](#), [Watcher Sliver](#), [Thrill of the Hunt](#), [Plunder](#), [Pendelhaven Elder](#), [Saltcrusted Steppe](#), [Faceless Devourer](#)

Click [here](#).

Not too much to go on here, so I decide to take the most powerful on-colour (ish) card in [Feebleness](#) and try to bring the Soot back into the realms of playability.

Pick: [Feebleness](#)

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

[Ashcoat Bear](#), [Amrou Seekers](#), [Call to the Netherworld](#), [Drifter il-Dal](#), [Havenwood Wurm](#), [Basal Sliver](#), [Opaline Sliver](#), [Gustcloak Cavalier](#)

Click [here](#).

There's nothing to do here except take the [Havenwood Wurm](#) and increase the chance that we have enough playables in green if the colours swing that way. I don't really want to reopen the green option, but I'm almost never going to play the [Basal Sliver](#).

Pick: [Havenwood Wurm](#)

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

[Clockspinning](#), [Sidewinder Sliver](#), [Fungal Reaches](#), [Krosan Grip](#), [Voidmage Husher](#), [Kher Keep](#), [Mountain](#)

Click [here](#).

When things go awry, grab fixers as often as possible because it will normally be the case that you are forced to play a three-colour deck with a dodgy manabase to have enough playables.

Pick: Fungal Reaches

### Pack 1, Pick 10

Scarwood Treefolk, Gaze of Justice, Viscid Lemures, Mwonvuli Acid-Moss, Blazing Blade Askari, Fool's Demise

Click [here](#).

The option here is between the **Viscid Lemures** and the **Blazing Blade Askari**. I have more reasons to play black than red at this point, so it makes the Lemures the stronger pick. However, I want to mention some strategy when you feel a draft deck getting away from you, possibly because you made an early mistake, but more often because the players upstream to you have no idea what they are doing and are chopping and changing all the time. What is normally best to do in these circumstances is to take big creatures so that even if your guys are bad, they're going to be big, meaning you can squeeze out victories through size as opposed to quality.

Pick: Viscid Lemures

### Pack 1, Pick 11

Gaze of Justice, Bogardan Rager, Sangrophage, D'Avenant Healer, Barbed Shocker

Pick: Bogardan Rager

### Pack 1, Pick 12

Pentarch Ward, Jedit's Dragoons, Savage Thallid, Ancient Grudge

Pick: Ancient Grudge

### Pack 1, Pick 13

Divine Congregation, Mindlash Sliver, Gustcloak Cavalier

Pick: Mindlash Sliver

### Pack 1, Pick 14

Ghitu Firebreathing, Academy Ruins

It is worth noting here that this is obviously a very unusual pick, especially as the **Academy Ruins** is sometimes even playable. I was brought up by the Sam Gomersall school of **Magic Online**, which instructs its pupils to take the card with the highest tax value if you don't think anything else in the pack will make your deck. I've been gifted with an infinite account thanks to this column, so for me the Ruins means nothing, but for the guy next to me, it makes a fine gift. Never hurts to be nice.

Pick: Ghitu Firebreathing

### Pack 1, Pick 15

Pendelhaven Elder

Pick: Pendelhaven Elder

Alas, we are now looking at the wreck I feared the draft might become. We have a couple of cards in green, a couple in black, a couple in red, and a couple in blue. Each colour is only really one card deep with a bad back up card. Of the four options, blue and black are the best, unsurprisingly, as they contain our first and second pick. It might have been in our interest to go white, had we picked the **Duskrider Peregrine**.

Now we have to use *Planar Chaos* to help fix what we have. It will probably be the case that both blue and black will flow from the left as we took most of the playable cards in those colours that came our way, so that is the direction I feel we might head, although I am ready to change my mind if some nice stuff comes my way. The only really certain thing is that we probably won't play white. Even if it does flow from the right, we will not accumulate enough playables to make it worth it from just *Future Sight* alone (although I am sure we will have to pass some late-pick white cards anyhow).

## Pack 2, Pick 1

Mire Boa, Battering Sliver, Aven Riftwatcher, Erratic Mutation, Wistful Thinking, Keldon Marauders, Dash Hopes, Shade of Trokair, Revered Dead, Rathi Trapper, Fa'adiyah Seer, Aether Membrane, Kavu Predator, Riptide Pilferer, Timbermare

Click [here](#).

Not exactly the clear-cut signal I was hoping for to help us decide upon colours. **Mire Boa** contends for the green corner, but can be dismissed because I'm not sure how open green will be and I don't want to dip into it at this point just for an efficient two-drop. This leaves us with the option of **Rathi Trapper** or **Erratic Mutation**. Both are removal, and both are fairly colour light, even if the Trapper demands a little more in the long run. I opted for the trapper because it is the stronger card, being the stronger removal.

Pick: Rathi Trapper

### Pack 2, Pick 2

Stingscourger, Synchronous Sliver, Utopia Vow, Dawn Charm, Spitting Sliver, Uktabi Drake, Ghost Tactician, Fireflight Mage, Vampiric Link, Skirk Shaman, Healing Leaves, Venarian Glimmer, Treacherous Urge, Keen Sense

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This is a little more like it, even if I don't really want to be pushed towards red as we saw little after the **Sudden Shock**. Stingscourger is the only card in this pack that you genuinely want in your deck—far more so than our other option of **Utopia Vow**.

Pick: Stingscourger

### Pack 2, Pick 3

Cradle to Grave, Reflex Sliver, Dreamscape Artist, Poultice Sliver, Vitaspore Thallid, Brain Gorgers, Fury Charm, Merfolk Thaumaturgist, Mana Tithe, Saltblast, Muck Drubb, Shivan Wumpus, Magus of the Tabernacle

Click [here](#).

Even this late, the Magus is a temptation. Even though I do not want to be white, this is about the only card that would cause me to stoop into the colour. Maybe at this point I should have thrown caution to the wind and leapt, but I feel that consolidation of my pool is the only way we will have a playable deck at the end of the draft. This then leaves us to decide between **Cradle to Grave** and **Dreamscape Artist**. This is not much of a decision for me as we have already taken a Trapper and the Cradle happily pushes further down the Black path, giving us a definite colour for the first time. The Artist is not powerful enough, even though I will probably need colour-fixing at the end of the day, blue might not even be played and if it is, it might only be a splash, so this two-drop gets left behind.

Pick: Cradle to Grave

### Pack 2, Pick 4

Poultice Sliver, Dreamscape Artist, Ridged Kusite, Pallid Mycoderm, Brain Gorgers, Dust Corona, Gossamer Phantasm, Seal of Primordium, Essence Warden, Sophic Centaur, Dormant Sliver, Serendib Sorcerer

Click [here](#).

This draft doesn't get any easier as it goes on. I thought I was finally able to leave blue behind but there really isn't anything in this pack strong enough to pick over the Serendib Sorcerer. I picked it still with the intent to not play blue if need be, purely because it was the only option here. However, it does now mean that blue (with **Ephemeron** and this) edges ahead of red in the race (with only **Sudden Shock**, Rager and the Goblin Man-o'-War). It should also be noted that red is the more splashable of the two as well, so this shift is not necessarily a bad thing.

Pick: Serendib Sorcerer

### Pack 2, Pick 5

Veiling Oddity, Ridged Kusite, Needlepeak Spider, Uktabi Drake, Blightspeaker, Aquamorph Entity, Evolution Charm, Primal Plasma, Simian Spirit Guide, Hammerheim Deadeye, Braids, Conjurer Adept

Click [here](#).

This pick was so open it almost hurt. Blue had three critters worth looking at, black offered up **Blightspeaker** help our Trapper along and red threw **Hammerheim Deadeye** to add into the mix. Power wise these cards are all very, very close and the pick normally takes things like curve and need into account. This deck is in need, but not to fill a specific hole, but for aid in general. The Deadeye loses here as red is currently in the splash slot. Of all the blue cards, the **Aquamorph Entity** leads the trio of critters because it will be playable as a morph, but more importantly, it will provide the defense this deck will surely need. However, the safest pick here is to go with our deepest colour, and leave the colour decision to be made later on.

Pick: Blightspeaker

### Pack 2, Pick 6

Veiling Oddity, Midnight Charm, Wistful Thinking, Reality Acid, Citanul Woodreaders, Bog Serpent, Merfolk Thaumaturgist, Psychotrope Thallid, Fungal Behemoth, Cradle to Grave

Click [here](#).

Green is no longer really an option, meaning we need not look at Citanul Woodreaders. Our deck is not really looking too aggressive so we do not really want the Oddity and I think the second Cradle is a better card anyway.

Pick: Cradle to Grave

### Pack 2, Pick 7

Battering Sliver, Mire Boa, Pallid Mycoderm, Keldon Marauders, Dust Corona, Essence Warden, Bog Serpent, Dismal Failure, Kor Dirge



Click [here](#).

Good green cards continue to appear late to frustrate us a little, but we are in no position to be able to switch. Here there are splutterings of playable cards in our colours but none of them as powerful or as game-changing as **Kor Dirge**. This is helpful because I want to push black as much as possible to alleviate any mana problems that will occur later on when the second colour is finally chosen.

Pick: **Kor Dirge**

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

**Cradle to Grave, Vitaspore Thallid, Dash Hopes, Aquamorph Entity, Brute Force, Mana Tithe, Primal Plasma, Mycologist**

Click [here](#).

The first thing that caught my eye when I saw this pack was the absence of red cards and the presence of blue ones, meaning I could finally resolve the colour dilemma. However, no matter how much we might want creatures or to have the dilemma resolved, it is still correct to take the more powerful, more on-colour removal.

It's worth noting the effect that having three Cradles will have on our picks. Any spell that gives us additional reasons for keeping mana open will be welcomed; expensive cards will look less tempting because we will have to tap out for them and this will leave us vulnerable to something escaping into play. The games will be very dependant on keeping the Cradles open as often as possible, and when we do have to leave ourselves open, we want to have another answer in hand for that threat.

Pick: **Cradle to Grave**

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

**Battering Sliver, Wistful Thinking, Keldon Marauders, Dash Hopes, Fa'adiyah Seer, Kavu Predator, Riptide Pilferer**

Click [here](#).

This is a trying pick, but hopefully without too many consequences. It raises the colour issue to the forefront again, with **Riptide Pilferer** and **Battering Sliver** sparring on their colour's behalf. I think it's a very tight call, but I opted for the **Pilferer**, purely because I could envision games being won by dropping him early and then paving the way with Cradles.

Pick: **Riptide Pilferer**

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

**Uktabi Drake, Firefight Mage, Vampiric Link, Healing Leaves, Venarian Glimmer, Treacherous Urge**

Pick: **Treacherous Urge**

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

**Reflex Sliver, Vitaspore Thallid, Brain Gorgers, Fury Charm, Merfolk Thaumaturgist**

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A slight choice here. The **Fury Charm** and **Merfolk Thaumaturgist** are less favoured than the **Brain Gorgers** because they are less likely to make the final deck; on top of this, I feel that in this deck, the **Gorger** adds more as we are in need of creatures with some power.

Pick: **Brain Gorgers**

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

**Brain Gorgers, Dust Corona, Seal of Primordium, Sophic Centaur**

Pick: **Brain Gorgers**

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

**Ridged Kusite, Simian Spirit Guide, Braids, Conjurer Adept**

Pick: **Ridged Kusite**

#### **Pack 2, Pick 14**

**Wistful Thinking, Reality Acid**

Pick: **Wistful Thinking**

#### **Pack 2, Pick 15**

**Bog Serpent**

Pick: **Bog Serpent**

I think this pack went quite well. Although the colour problem has not been completely solved, we have at least settled heavily into black. This means that even without the aid of fixers, should we need to, we will be able to splash both blue and red, probably with a heavier leaning towards my favourite colour because of the Sorcerer. Unless *Future Sight* forces us otherwise with significantly more powerful red cards, then I envisage the deck to be black-blue splashing red, probably with an 8-6-4 manabase. We are also light on quality creatures and I would like to pick up some good win conditions. The two late *Brain Gorgers* and *Ridged Kusite* might mean that a madness theme could appear, but unless the cards fall together correctly it is nothing I intend to try and make work this late on.

## Pack 3, Pick 1

Unblinking Bleb, Lost Hours, Wrap in Vigor, Knight of Sursi, Leaden Fists, Nessian Courser, Blade of the Sixth Pride, Sarcomite Myr, Death Rattle, Homing Sliver, Snake Cult Initiation, Emblem of the Warmind, Imperiosaur, Cloud Key, Tolaria West

Click [here](#).

No choices here. A few inferior cards in our less certain colours, but nothing to stop us taking the *Death Rattle* and moving on to the next pick.

Pick: *Death Rattle*

## Pack 3, Pick 2

Bogardan Lancer, Knight of Sursi, Grave Peril, Wrap in Vigor, Samite Censer-Bearer, Grave Scrabblers, Henchfiend of Ukor, Whip-Spine Drake, Lymph Sliver, Homing Sliver, Second Wind, Fleshwrither, Bloodshot Trainee, Bitter Ordeal

Click [here](#).

This is a difficult pick. We cannot pick the *Fleshwrither* here and stay neutral as we managed throughout *Planar Chaos* because it simply isn't good enough. This means we have to take either the *Henchfiend of Ukor* or one of the blue cards. I feel that both blue cards are more powerful and I would rather be heavier blue at this point, so we are left with the tricky decision between *Second Wind* and *Whip-Spine Drake*.

Normally, the Wind is the better card, providing blue with some much-needed removal. It is not so clear here as we have a reasonable amount of removal and are lacking in finishers. This would normally push me to pick the Drake, but I am worried about mana issues here and I'd rather not overload the deck on blue mana. However, it is time to take a stand, and the deck may even end up not playing red at all. 3/3 flyers can win games all by themselves.

Pick: *Whip-Spine Drake*

## Pack 3, Pick 3

Judge Unworthy, Leaden Fists, Quiet Disrepair, Saltskitter, Unblinking Bleb, Vedalken Aethermage, Blade of the Sixth Pride, Sporoloth Ancient, Grinning Ignus, Whip-Spine Drake, Storm Entity, Spellwild Ouphe, Aven Mindcensor

Click [here](#).

Red things don't appear to be coming which is a good thing for us at this point and we are rewarded by taking the plunge into blue by a second Drake. *Leaden Fists* simply isn't in the same weight category.

Pick: *Whip-Spine Drake*

## Pack 3, Pick 4

Putrid Cyclops, Rift Elemental, Llanowar Empath, Marshaling Cry, Grave Scrabblers, Lumithread Field, Mesmeric Sliver, Flowstone Embrace, Nacatl War-Pride, Aven Mindcensor, Arcanum Wings, Emberwilde Augur

Click [here](#).

What a disappointment. Our deck is too much in need to even contemplate hating the *Nacatl War-Pride* so we have to make the decision between the now splash colour *Flowstone Embrace* or the much weaker *Grave Scrabblers*. As I mentioned in the interim, I am not wild about forcing a madness engine into the deck, so I will pick the splashable removal.

Pick: *Flowstone Embrace*

## Pack 3, Pick 5

Oblivion Crown, Saltskitter, Cutthroat *ii*-Dal, Fomori Nomad, Logic Knot, Lucent Liminid, Vedalken Aethermage, Cloudseeder, Minions' Murmurs, Llanowar Reborn, Bloodshot Trainee

Click [here](#).



I'm still not certain what the correct pick here is. Having just mentioned how I do not want to force the madness, it is still handy to have outlets for the two Gorgers I will almost certainly be playing, which suggests the Cloud Seeder. The Nomad can be dismissed fairly safely as we already have enough Red cards to splash without causing too many waves for the mana. This leaves us with the option of Seeder versus **Logic Knot**. The Knot keeps in theme with keeping Cradle mana open. I feel though that it is not powerful enough for the deck at this point and that the Seeder helps our curve and makes the **Brain Gorgers** more attractive and will mean that we might be able to play a **Grave Scrabblers** if we pick one up later.

Pick: Cloudseeder

### **Pack 3, Pick 6**

Augur *ii*-Vec, Petrified Plating, Bogardan Lancer, Lumithread Field, Grinning Ignus, Deepcavern Imp, Llanowar Mentor, Sliversmith, Dust of Moments, Nix

Pick: Deepcavern Imp

### **Pack 3, Pick 7**

Gift of Granite, Augur of Skulls, Lost Hours, Petrified Plating, Lymph Sliver, Blind Phantasm, Virulent Sliver, Mass of Ghouls, Ramosian Revivalist

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For such a late pick we are presented with some options. The **Mass of Ghouls** can be set aside early as we already have a few late drops and want to leave mana open for Cradle; the main reason though is because our deck is going to need some early defense. I was hoping a **Blind Phantasm** would make its way into our pile as this is exactly the kind of deck where it finds a home. Unfortunately, I think that **Augur of Skulls** is probably the better creature because his ability to steal the opponent's last two cards in the late game is not to be overlooked.

Pick: Augur of Skulls

### **Pack 3, Pick 8**

Llanowar Augur, Samite Censer-Bearer, Frenzy Sliver, Patrician's Scorn, Logic Knot, Char-Rumbler, Utopia Mycon, Goldmeadow Lookout

Pick: Logic Knot

### **Pack 3, Pick 9**

Unblinking Bleb, Lost Hours, Wrap in Vigor, Sarcomite Myr, Homing Sliver, Snake Cult Initiation, Emblem of the Warmind

Pick: Unblinking Bleb

### **Pack 3, Pick 10**

Bogardan Lancer, Wrap in Vigor, Samite Censer-Bearer, Homing Sliver, Bloodshot Trainee, Bitter Ordeal

Pick: Homing Sliver

### **Pack 3, Pick 11**

Quiet Disrepair, Saltskitter, Vedalken Aethermage, Blade of the Sixth Pride, Grinning Ignus

Pick: Vedalken Aethermage

### **Pack 3, Pick 12**

Putrid Cyclops, Rift Elemental, Llanowar Empath, Arcanum Wings

Pick: Llanowar Empath

### **Pack 3, Pick 13**

Oblivion Crown, Saltskitter, Bloodshot Trainee

Pick: Bloodshot Trainee

### **Pack 3, Pick 14**

Bogardan Lancer, Dust of Moments

Pick: Bogardan Lancer

### **Pack 3, Pick 15**

Gift of Granite

Pick: Gift of Granite

Now that the dust has settled, let's see what we're left with. The only three red cards that we have worth playing or being splashed are **Stingscourger**, **Sudden Shock**, and **Flowstone Embrace**. However, do we have enough

solid playables within blue and black to need to splash at all, and if we do, should we? Fiddling around during deck construction led to the following:

Time Spiral Draft Deck		H.dec 	
4-3-2-2 Queue			
Main Deck		Sideboard	
40 cards			
8 <b>Island</b>	3 <b>Cradle to Grave</b>	1 <b>Ancient Grudge</b>	
9 <b>Swamp</b>	1 <b>Death Rattle</b>	1 <b>Bloodshot Trainee</b>	
<hr/>		1 <b>Bogardan Lancer</b>	
17 lands	1 <b>Feebleness</b>	1 <b>Bogardan Rager</b>	
	1 <b>Kor Dirge</b>	1 <b>Bog Serpent</b>	
	1 <b>Logic Knot</b>	1 <b>Cloudseeder</b>	
1 <b>Dodecapod</b>	1 <b>Strangling Soot</b>	1 <b>Durkwood Baloth</b>	
1 <b>Augur of Skulls</b>	1 <b>Think Twice</b>	1 <b>Flowstone Embrace</b>	
1 <b>Blightspeaker</b>	1 <b>Treacherous Urge</b>	1 <b>Fungal Reaches</b>	
2 <b>Brain Gorgers</b>	<hr/>		1 <b>Ghitu Firebreathing</b>
1 <b>Deepcavern Imp</b>	10 other spells	1 <b>Gift of Granite</b>	
1 <b>Errant Ephemeron</b>		1 <b>Havenwood Wurm</b>	
1 <b>Rathi Trapper</b>		1 <b>Homing Sliver</b>	
1 <b>Riptide Pilferer</b>		1 <b>Llanowar Empath</b>	
1 <b>Serendib Sorcerer</b>		1 <b>Mindlash Sliver</b>	
1 <b>Viscid Lemures</b>		1 <b>Pendelhaven Elder</b>	
2 <b>Whip-Spine Drake</b>		1 <b>Ridged Kusite</b>	
<hr/>		1 <b>Stingscourger</b>	
13 creatures		1 <b>Sudden Shock</b>	
		1 <b>Unblinking Bleb</b>	
		1 <b>Vedalken Aethermage</b>	
		1 <b>Wistful Thinking</b>	
		<hr/>	
		22 sideboard cards	

This is the strongest build for the deck I can see. The cards in the lower right hand corner are our options. We can splash the Red, however, there aren't actually too many cards that we can cut. The deck is light on creatures no matter how we build it, so we cannot really afford to shave any there. This means that the deck's weak links are **Treacherous Urge** and **Logic Knot**. The former is the kind of card that shines in bad decks. It has the potential to be a game wrecker. Alternatively, it can miss or be little more than an expensive **Ostracize**, but I have found that it tends to get there more often than not.

It seems, therefore, in our interest to not splash red. The three on-colour creatures are all worth considering. The **Ridged Kusite** can be set aside easily because there are only two cards in the deck (the **Brain Gorgers**) that really want first strike. The **Bog Serpent** is so almost good enough for the maindeck, given that the deck has little to no defense and it's a great cad to follow one of the Drakes. However, it's just not enough, although it will definitely come in against black decks and decks with lots of ground-pounders. The **Cloud Seeder** just didn't cut the mustard. It won't have enough impact on the game to be worth it.

For how the draft went, I don't think the deck is as bad as it could have been. I made sacrifices and kept my options open for as long as possible without costing me anything. This deck is definitely the result of the indecisions of the players on my right.

I beat my first opponent quite easily, killing his first few guys with Cradles and finishing him with a Drake and a Gorgor according to plan. He took the second game whilst I drew my chaff, and I won the third off the back of an early Pilferer and a timely **Treacherous Urge** on a **Penumbra Spider**. In the semis my opponent mana-screwed out of the first game and had no answer to my Drake and Lemures (he was playing black). I lost the second to his better deck. Game 3 I was sure I'd lose, but I stayed in the game with Cradles, finally drew a **Bog Serpent** to swing things in my favour, and **Logic Knotted** his **Phthisis** the turn it would've killed me. Unsurprisingly, I was swiftly crushed in the final by a good player with good cards.

Next week we'll be back on track talking about **Lorwyn**, and I will actually have some experience with the set thanks to all the three-on-threes I'm playing here in **Valencia**. Till then,

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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