

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



Giants, Faeries, and Farewells

Quentin Martin
Limited Information
Tuesday, December 18,
2007



This is a sad occasion for me. It's my last article here at the helm of Limited Information. I'm leaving for several reasons. I've somehow found my way into the real world and I don't have enough time to really dedicate to **Magic** and writing these articles takes up more time than you'd think. It's not all bad news, as I'm passing the reins back into the more-than-capable hands of Noah Weil. I hope you've enjoyed the places I've taken the column and I hope to see you at a Limited Pro Tour soon.

I'll finish off the lists partly as promised. The whole list is far too much to tackle on top of everything else, as these things take a long time to prepare and check and mistakes still slip through. I've also decided to cut doing Goblins, despite this being my last article, because, simply put, I don't know how to draft them; or, at least, not enough to confidently pass it on to you guys. I never draft them because I don't feel they have too much power although Olivier Ruel assures me that to make them work you have to have some combination of multiple **Fodder Launches** and **Tar Pitchers** and then **Boggart Birth Rites**, but this never really comes together for me. Faeries, however, are probably my most drafted archetype.

Faeries

The cornerstone of the Faeries archetype, in fact about the only thing that really makes it 'tribal' at all, is **Dreamspoiler Witches**. This means you plan to fill your deck with as many instants and tricks as possible which accounts for them being ranked slightly higher on the list. Despite this, I rank **Pestermite** higher. This is because I think it sums up the entire archetype much better. Faeries can get behind on tempo and never come back. They have few outs to large creatures and tend to get beaten up by **Benthicores** the world over. To compensate for this, **Pestermite Time Walks** opponents in the early game by tapping a land in their upkeep, saves damage by tapping a crucial attacker, opens up the offence by taking out a blocker, triggers **Witches**, and provides a hefty clock. Some games get won simply because a curve of turn-three **Pestermite** followed by **Witches** and then a **Sentinels of Glen Elendra** is a flying army that is hard to race because of the **Pestermite's** initial tempo boost.



- Profane Command
- Shriekmaw
- Cryptic Command
- Sower of Temptation
- Wydwen, the Biting Gale
- Mistbind Clique
- Dread
- Mirror Entity
- Cairn Wanderer
- Mulldrifter
- Liliana Vess
- Silvergill Douser
- Nameless Inversion
- Eyeblight's Ending
- Fathom Trawl
- Final Revels (I'm just not the biggest fan)
- Æthersnipe
- Moonglove Extract
- Briarhorn
- Lash Out
- Oblivion Ring
- Crib Swap
- Faerie Harbinger
- Pestermite
- Dreamspoiler Witches
- Oona's Prowler
- Wort, Boggart Auntie (if you've no **Nameless Inversion** to splash or to fetch with a Harbinger, she goes down)
- Shapesharer
- Warren Pilferers
- Jace Beleren
- Scion of Oona

PRODUCTS

MAGIC ONLINE

MAGIC WORLDS

2007 World Championships Video Coverage

MESSAGE BOARDS

Magic General Forum

magicthegathering.com Forum

RULES

Ghostly Changeling
 Marsh Flitter
 Sentinels of Glen Elendra
 Guile
 Ethereal Whiskergill
 Peppersmoke
 Weed Strangle
 Arbiter of Knollridge
 Glen Elendra Pranksters
 Tarfire
 Broken Ambitions
 Galepowder Mage
 Nath of the Gilt-Leaf
 Changeling Hero
 Changeling Titan
 Merrow Harbinger
 Turtleshell Changeling
 Whirlpool Whelm
 Neck Snap
 Makeshift Mannequin (very dependent on targets)
 Colfenor's Plans
 Stonybrook Angler
 Streambed Aquitects
 Wings of Velis Vel
 Faerie Trickery
 Benthicore
 Fallsage
 Surgespanner
 Merrow Reejerey (hard to evaluate because I tend to now go Merfolk if it's not too late)
 Shelldock Isle
 Vivid Creek
 Vivid Marsh
 Secluded Glen
 Vivid Crag
 Auntie's Hovel
 Wanderwine Hub
 Gilt-Leaf Palace
 Boggart Harbinger
 Hornet Harasser
 Spellstutter Sprite
 Vivid Meadow
 Vivid Grove
 Deathrender
 Silvergill Adept
 Skeletal Changeling
 Thieving Sprite
 Shimmering Grotto
 Springleaf Drum
 Footbottom Feast
 Mournwhelk
 Thoughtseize
 Howltooth Hollow
 Scattering Stroke
 Moonglove Winnower
 Hunter of Eyeblights
 Tideshaper Mystic
 Wanderer's Twig
 Glimmerdust Nap
 Deepread Merrow
 Amoeboid Changeling
 Inkfathom Divers
 Ponder
 Hurly-Burly
 Lignify
 Gilt-Leaf Ambush
 Fistful of Force
 Runed Stalactite
 Nightshade Stinger

Special Mention: Rebellion of the Flamekin

I mention this Elemental enchantment because it is the cornerstone of one of my favourite archetypes. If you see it early, it will almost certainly wheel, meaning you can snap it up the second time around. In the meantime, you can place a slightly higher priority on [Lash Out](#), [Broken Ambitions](#) and [Whirlpool Whelm](#). You should also pick up the late [Paperfin Rascals](#) and [Ringskippers](#) slightly higher than usual. Only do this if you know you'll get the Rebellion back and only if it's the first booster so you maximise your chances of getting multiples later on. The deck tends to be

Faerie-based, so cards like **Fire-Belly Changeling** tend to be very playable to keep the count up. Have fun.

I mentioned earlier that Faeries can get overrun by fatties in the late game. To this end, you need to keep the deck as tempo-based as possible, continually nibbling with flyers so you can race their large guys. Another effective way the deck has to combat fatties is counterspells. From as early as turn four onwards, the deck tries its hardest to not cast anything in its own turn, abusing flash guys to the limit. This means it will almost always have mana open for counterspells, meaning they find a home in limited more so than almost any other limited deck.

I really like **Neck Snap** in Faeries because it's much harder to play around. The deck tries to keep four mana open as often as possible anyway, and you'll seldom have an actual **Plains** in play, more likely a **Vivid land** or **Shimmering Grotto**, making the element of surprise even better.

A cycle of cards I think are underrated in general are those that come with token minions. **Marsh Flitter**, **Benthicore**, and, in other decks, **Hearthcage Giant** are all incredibly powerful cards. I try to always play at least one **Benthicore** in every blue deck as I think he is a great win condition that almost always generates card advantage if not actual game wins. **Marsh Flitter** is a perfect card for Faeries as it provides card advantage, tempo, and great defence. It is very difficult to attack into the little Faerie and its minions. On top of which, the little guy will start swinging back soon anyway.



Giants

Thundercloud Shaman
Mirror Entity
Austere Command
Chandra Nalaar
Brion Stoutarm
Sunrise Sovereign
Incendiary Command
Purity
Shriekmaw
Ajani Goldmane
Brigid, Hero of Kinsbaile
Cloudgoat Ranger
Changeling Hero
Oblivion Ring
Lash Out
Crib Swap
Ashling the Pilgrim
Final Revels
Galepowder Mage
Thoughtweft Trio
Tarfire
Moonglove Extract
Hearthcage Giant
Giant Harbinger
Goldmeadow Harrier
Changeling Berserker
Stinkdrinker Daredevil
Avian Changeling
Kithkin Greatheart
Wort, Boggart Auntie
Tar Pitcher
Militia's Pride
Plover Knights
Mulldrifter
Briarhorn
Nameless Inversion
Eyebright's Ending
Hamletback Goliath
Arbiter of Knollridge
Hoofprints of the Stag
Blind-Spot Giant
Mudbutton Torchrunner
Consuming Bonfire
Cairn Wanderer
Changeling Titan
Flamekin Spitfire
Knight of Meadowgrain
Crush Underfoot
Æthersnipe
Neck Snap
Axegrinder Giant

Fire-Belly Changeling
 Lowland Oaf
 Wizened Cenn
 Hillcomber Giant
 Immaculate Magistrate
 Warren Pilferers
 Glarewielder
 Vivid Crag
 Vivid Meadow
 Kithkin Harbinger
 Surge of Thoughtweft
 Soulbright Flamekin
 Inner-Flame Igniter
 Spinnerock Knell
 Ancient Amphitheater
 Auntie's Hovel
 Vivid Marsh
 Shimmering Grotto
 Wanderwine Hub
 Vivid Creek
 Vivid Grove
 Inner-Flame Acolyte
 Kinsbaile Balloonist
 Lairwatch Giant (if you get lots of *Stinkdrinker Daredevils*, this goes way up)
 Hurly-Burly
 Windbrisk Heights
 Giant's Ire
 Heat Shimmer
 Adder-Staff Boggart
 Wanderer's Twig
 Springleaf Drum
 Runed Stalactite
 Kithkin Healer
 Goldmeadow Stalwart
 Kinsbaile Skirmisher
 Triclopan Sight

I mentioned the main strategies for Giants in [my last walkthrough](#). I'll highlight them again. Take the three crucial commons : *Stinkdrinker Daredevil*, *Avian Changeling* and *Kithkin Greatheart*, whenever there isn't removal in the pack or something higher up on the pick list. They form the basis for the archetype, and aside from a late pick *Thundercloud Shaman*, *Stinkdrinker Daredevil* is the easiest signal to see if giants are open. *Hearthcage Giant* is one of my favourite reasons to be giants as he's just so powerful, providing you with three great guys and the ability to pump and save your other Giants or make their overlap lethal.



Apart from that, Giants are fairly easy to draft. They lack card advantage, which is one reason a splashed *Mulldrifter* is so good, but they are also one of the archetypes that winds up with the most playables because its picks are so low and come around late. This means that the deck seldom splashes, making for a solid mana base. If you have three or four *Daredevils*, which isn't too uncommon, then, obviously, pick as many expensive Giants as possible—fill your deck up with all the *Axe-grinder Giants* and *Lairwatch Giants* you can.

The deck will often have a sub-theme of either Kithkin or Elementals and it is important to note how powerful either theme becomes, because then you can evaluate cards like *Smokebraider* and *Wizened Cenn*. However, as a rule of thumb, Elementals never become too influential, or at least, they won't whilst you're still mainly a Giant deck rather than a deck splashing Giants. Kithkin have no real theme beyond the Cenn and stronger *Surge of Thoughtweft*, so just keep an eye on their numbers.

Giants can get outraced in the air, so be sure to pick up as much removal as possible and make sure that the deck is capable of tempo draws to race them if it is low in this department. This is where the *Kithkin Greathearts* and *Blind-Spot Giants* come in. I try to pick every *Blind-Spot* that comes my way and then worry about picking the *Avian* and *Fire-Belly Changelings*. If worse comes to the worst and you have some *Greathearts*, then feel free to supplement the deck with a *Runed Stalactite*.

Blue

One final, leaving rant: I've oft been criticised for my love of blue, as if it were a bad thing. If my time writing here leaves you with any lasting message, let it be *why* I so frequently draft blue. Limited 101: in my experience, card advantage is the most important and influential factor in Limited. Which colour always has the most sources of card advantage? Blue. Additionally, blue's power is often because of subtle cards that your average player finds hard to evaluate correctly or put into use efficiently; because of this, blue is often underdrafted. These two factors mean that it will often be in your favour to draft the colour. If you can't, or don't feel at home with blue, then learn.

All that said, you should be at home drafting each colour, colour combination, and archetype, and it is my failing, for example, that I don't feel at home drafting Goblins. I mean, I will still win reasonably often with them but I am not at ease with them as I am with the other tribes. Try everything, watch others draft, and question their picks afterwards if they don't mind. Watch others deck build. Most of you won't do enough drafts to feel at home with every possibility that can occur, but through observation and discussion, you can gain almost as much experience as if you had drafted yourself.

So long, and thanks for all the fish.

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.*



[Discuss](#) on the message boards



[Respond](#) via email



[Quentin Martin](#) archive

[About Us](#) | [Jobs](#) | [New to the Game?](#) | [Inside Wizards](#) | [Find a Store](#) | [Press](#) | [Help](#) | [Sitemap](#)

© 1995-2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
[Terms of Use](#) - [Privacy Statement](#)

