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Double Vision

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MAGIC ONLINE

PRO TOUR-KUALA LUMPUR

Welcome back to Limited Information! We've got a few things going on this week, so first things first, let's talk about the poll from last week:

Play first or draw first?		
Play first. This deck is aggressive and wants to lay the beats ASAP.	3074	45.8%
Draw first. His deck is prone to self-destruct. Why not promote it?	1589	23.7%
Draw first: He wants something. That's reason enough to do the opposite.	1542	23.0%
Play first. You always play first in Draft. The opponent is wrong for wanting to do anything else.	504	7.5%
Total	6709	100.0%

Very interesting results! Not quite a split decision between playing and drawing, but certainly no overwhelming preference. Of the four decisions, the inward-looking "Play—The deck is aggressive" was the clear favorite. Does this show a preference towards fulfilling personal hopes? The other play first decision, the "always" rule, was significantly unpopular. Still, that alternate play option kept the poll out of a virtual tie. There was only sixty votes' difference between drawing first because he was going to self-destruct and because he *wanted* to not self-destruct. A trifling difference perhaps, but one relies on your analysis of the decision and the other relies on theirs. I'll leave the prominent authority for that situation in your hands. So what's the call here?

This is an important and subtly complicated decision. Have you ever sideboarded differently based on whether you were playing first or drawing first? (You should!) Tricking your opponent, or at least doing the opposite of what they want, is no small achievement. But it's not the only value in play here.

Back in the day I would always do the opposite of what my opponent was hoping, a.k.a. Option 3. If they drew first in Limited and they won, I would draw first the next game 100% of the time, regardless of what they and I were playing, or more accurately, whether they were correct to draw first or not. My thinking at the time was that I could handle the change in fortunes, and hopefully my opponent could not. I was playing on their likelihood of being unhappy with the situation. While not completely worthless, this theory had holes.

First off, nothing in Limited is 100% correct do all the time. Yes, even in draft there are times where it's correct to not play a land on the first turn, burn for one on the first turn, or summon **Spark Elemental** (**Spark Elemental** being the least likely to be correct). My adherence to this adversarial plan, contrary to empirical data, was a disservice to myself no matter how often I was going to be right. These days some questions resolve the issue of playing or drawing first in games two and/or three:

- What does my opponent want to do? (It is relevant, it's just not the only thing)
- Why does he or she want to do that?
- Is he or she right in wanting to do that?
- Does my deck badly need the extra card?
- Does my deck badly need to play lands and creatures first?
- Will I be mulliganing frequently / aggressively?
- Whose deck is stronger, and/or who needs to get luckier to win?

It's nice to figure this out ahead of time, because it really does affect sideboarding on both ends. In the hypothetical above, I may choose to draw first and side in **Faultgrinder**, a card far worse when you're on the play. Assuming those questions spin the right way, I would likely play first in this matchup, as I do in most. My opponent may have made a mistake in wishing to draw first, but either way, this aggressive red-black deck certainly wants to get its guys on the ground right quick. Honestly, there wasn't enough information given to come up with the "correct" answer here, so any choice was defensible. The point for questions like these, and situations in the real world, is to reason out a decision rather than blindly following some "rule." Fun stuff, but we've got a theme week to tackle.

+1/+1 counter week...Ummm, **Swell of Courage** is good? Yeah, I don't know. Reinforce has been talked about before, and its application isn't particularly complicated for Limited play. You know all those times where you wish you had a **Battlegrowth**? That's when you should use reinforce.

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RULES

RULES

Whee. Personally, I think we're due for a *Lorwyn / Lorwyn / Morningtide* walkthrough.

But here's the rub. *Morningtide* isn't out online yet. Unfortunately, between the **Magic Online** Version III transition and beta testing, it may take a while for those draft queues to spawn. And if we are waiting for V3, draft capture software may require some extra time to encompass the new visuals. Videos though... everyone likes video... I think we can try the video format again, at least when *Morningtide* is released online. Dates forthcoming, I'm told.

But this is not to say drafts aren't firing in the real world. In fact, as of this recording *Morningtide* had not officially been released, but the local shop was doing some unsanctioned *Lorwyn / Lorwyn / Morningtide* drafts with packs picked up at the Prerelease. And wouldn't it be fun to cover someone there? Actually, wouldn't it be fun to cover someone +1(!), and watch how their picks and signals affected each other? That *does* sound fun!

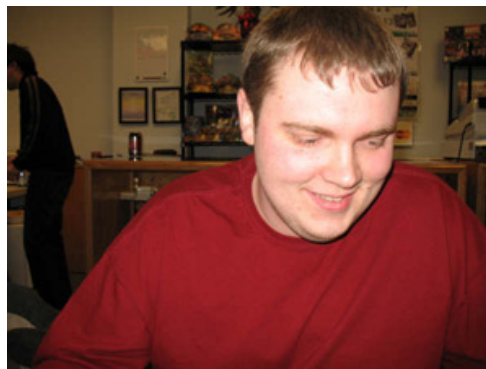
Said local store was First Pick Games, a relatively recent addition to the Seattle scene. It's a nice place with twice-weekly drafts, usually attracting 14-24 players at a time. This same space has seen regular Extended testing this past month, as discussed [here](#). Considering the quality players that regular testing and regular drafts attract, it wasn't too challenging to settle on the two players sitting next to each other.



News flash: *Swell of Courage* is good.



Brian Wong has been to multiple Pro Tours and is a frequent staple at the top tables of Northwest events. Dan Hanson, returning to the city after years of absence, is another wildly consistent player who's won States multiple times. Both gentlemen have an excellent pedigree, and of course were well rewarded in Krispy fashion for the privilege of being observed.



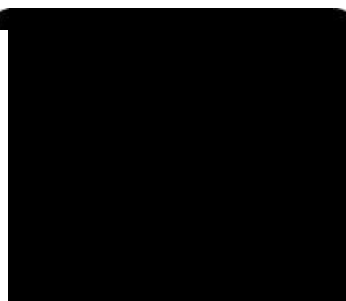


Because there was no software doing the work, as well as two people to watch at the same time, it wasn't possible to recreate the full boosters for each pick. To compensate, I asked each of them to bring the cards they were debating on to the forefront of the pack, which I then wrote down. Although they were generous on this score (I'm sure some cards listed weren't given super-serious considerations) it is interesting to watch both what the players found worthy of attention and how this shifted as the decks were being developed.

Pack 1: <i>Lorwyn</i>	Brian Wong	Dan Hanson
Pick 1	Nameless Inversion , Fertile Ground, Whirlpool Whelm	Thoughtseize , Merrow Reejerey, Elvish Harbinger, Wizeden Cenn, Stonybrook Angler
Pick 2	Merrow Reejerey, Elvish Harbinger , Wizeden Cenn	Elvish Harbinger, Blind-Spot Giant, Gilt-Leaf Ambush, Kinsbaile Balloonist, Peppersmoke
Pick 3	Elvish Harbinger , Gilt-Leaf Ambush	Bog-Strider Ash, Avian Changeling, Eyebright's Ending , Silvergill Douser,
Pick 4	Hoofprints of the Stag, Bog-Strider Ash , Avian Changeling, Silvergill Douser	Marsh Flitter , Silvergill Douser, Fodder Launch
Pick 5	Silvergill Douser , Fodder Launch, Kithkin Harbinger, Bog-Strider Ash	Cloudgoat Ranger, Lowland Oaf, Glen Elendra Pranksters , Footbottom Feast
Pick 6	Cloudgoat Ranger , Lowland Oaf, Footbottom Feast	Wings of Velis Vel , Benthicore, Paperfin Rascal, Hurly-Burly
Pick 7	Hearthcage Giant, Benthicore	Lowland Oaf, Paperfin Rascal , Ringskipper, Triclopean Sight, Spiderwig Boggart
Pick 8	Lowland Oaf, Spiderwig Boggart, Triclopean Sight, Ringskipper	Goldmeadow Stalwart, Lammastide Weave, Howltooth Hollow
Pick 9	Guardian of Cloverdell , Lammastide Weave	Broken Ambitions , Consuming Bonfire, Hillcomber Giant
Pick 10	Hillcomber Giant , Consuming Bonfire	Inner-Flame Acolyte, Kinsbaile Skirmisher , Goatnapper
Pick 11	Gilt-Leaf Seer , Inner-Flame Acolyte, Goatnapper	Inkfathom Divers
Pick 12	Boggart Birth Rite	Fodder Launch

...etc., with no late picks of note.

At the end of the first pack, Dan was solidly in blue-black, putting his first-pick rare draft to good use and getting some very late black goodness. I can't imagine it's correct to get a fourth-pick *Marsh Flitter* with *Morningtide* in the picture, for reasons we'll soon see. Compared to Dan's consistency, Brian was all over the place. A key juncture were picks 4 and 5, when Dan stuck with black and sent blue down to Brian. Brian eventually started to pick blue up, but a read on the signals showed that black was completely dry. Brian needed to figure out if Dan was with black, and if so, what he was pairing it with. Blue or green were the most likely candidates, either of which would be bad for Brian's current blue-green deck. Red was also possible, although some very late red cards from Dan should have showed Brian it was unlikely. Brian probably suspected he was getting cut



off a color besides the black, but it would have been tough to know which. However, Brian did gauge correctly that red was open, and even whispered to me that red was the color he should be involved with going further. That being said, a pair of **Elvish Harbingers** gave Brian the potential for a lot of different directions. Speaking of, Brian explained that he took the first Harbinger over the **Merrow Reejerey** both because of the first-pick **Nameless Inversion** and his general fondness for green-black or multicolored green. A legitimate direction to go.

And how about that late **Cloudgoat Ranger**? A tough spot for Brian, as Dan had no use for it and the white had completely dried up. I found out later white was generally underdrafted at the table, and that the only white player near Dan or Brian either didn't see it or didn't want to commit to double white at the time (he didn't remember). It was clear at this point Brian had some decisions to make, and some of his picks were going to have to get cut. Brian's language at the progression of the packs, unprintable, was a clear signal he understood the situation.



Pack 2: <i>Lorwyn</i>	Brian Wong	Dan Hanson
Pick 1	Thoughtweft Trio, Sunrise Sovereign, Avian Changeling, Lash Out , Warren Pilferers, Ghostly Changeling	Tarfire, Summon the School, Æthersnipe, Faerie Harbinger , Changeling Titan
Pick 2	Mulldrifter , Woodland Changeling, Weed Strangle, Glarewielder	Ghostly Changeling, Warren Pilferers
Pick 3	Smokebraider, Stonybrook Angler, Turtlesell Changeling , Nath's Elite	Ponder, Weed Strangle , Skeletal Changeling
Pick 4	Ceaseless Searblades, Fallowsage, Lys Alana Huntmaster	Stonybrook Anglers , Inkfathom Divers
Pick 5	Leaf Gilder , Incremental Growth	Fallowsage
Pick 6	Broken Ambitions, Gilt-Leaf Ambush , Stinkdrinker Daredevil, Blades of Velis Vel	Neck Snap, Aquitect's Will, Skeletal Changeling
Pick 7	Lys Alana Huntmaster , Ponder	Benthicore , Broken Ambitions
Pick 8	Wanderer's Twig	Runed Stalactite, Ponder
Pick 9	Elvish Handservant, Deeptread Merrow, Kithkin Daggerdare , Faerie Trickery	Surge of Thoughtweft, Shields of Velis Vel, Wild Ricochet, Quill-Slinger Boggart, Exiled Boggart
Pick 10	Glarewielder, Surge of Thoughtweft	Deeptread Merrow , Faerie Trickery
Pick 11	Thorn of Amethyst	Glarewielder , Thousand-Year Elixir
Pick 12	Caterwauling Boggart , Captivating Glance, Triclopean Sight, Hurly-Burly	Boggart Birth Rite , Zephyr Net
Pick 13	Aquitect's Will, Prowess of the Fair	Hurly-Burly

Despite Brian's plan (and first pick) of hitting up red, he stuck to his blue-green guns, picking up a pair of welcome **Lys Alana Huntmasters**. Considering the **Merrow Reejerey** and **Douser** sent over to the left, it's unsurprising Brian was scraping blue here. At this point Brian could have gone green with multi-multi-splash.

Dan for the most part stayed dedicated to his blue-black plan, noting with happy emphasis the classes of **Deeptread Merrow** and even **Exiled Boggart**. While Dan's deck looked exceptionally slow at this point, his position was excellent for some final-pack blue-black Faerie Rogue action. Note that since Dan was able to place his colors so early, he was able to hone in on themes of race and class. Brian, being stuck with color issues, had only a tertiary relationship with a race. On the other hand, Brian's cards were comparably powerful to Dan. For the final pack, Dan was set up to take care of a specific class interaction, while Brian was either there to fill out race quotas or pick up enough "good stuff" of whatever color to sublimate tribal synergies into raw power. Interestingly, while the players were overlapping at least one color, they had each maneuvered enough to not cross *themes*, presumably leaving each of them enough options to fill out any requirements.

Pack 3: <i>Morningtide</i>	Brian Wong	Dan Hanson

Pick 1	Vengeful Firebrand, Shard Volley, Veteran's Armaments , Pack's Disdain, Elvish Warrior, Dewdrop Spy, Waterspout Weavers	Fencer Clique, Final-Sting Faerie, Prickly Boggart, Stinkdrinker Bandit
Pick 2	Fencer Clique, Game-Trail Changeling , Sage's Dousing	Violet Pall , Nevermaker
Pick 3	Bosk Banneret, Nevermaker	Cloak and Dagger , Fencer Clique
Pick 4	Thornbite Staff, Fencer Clique, Obsidian Battle-Axe , Everbark Shaman, Elvish Warrior	Cloak and Dagger, Morsel Theft, Distant Melody
Pick 5	Fertilid, Unstoppable Ash , Lys Alana Bowmaster, Cloak and Dagger,	Disperse, Rivals' Duel, Prickly Boggart
Pick 6	Everbark Shaman, Fertilid , Rivals' Dual, Roar of the Crowd	Floodchaser, Frogtosser Banneret, Noggin Whack
Pick 7	Floodchaser, Research the Deep, Lys Alana Bowmaster	Festercreep , Vengeful Firebrand, Waterspout Weavers
Pick 8	Vengeful Firebrand, Waterspout Weavers, Roar of the Crowd	Prickly Boggart , Stream of Unconsciousness, Festercreep, Sage's Dousing
Pick 9	Sage's Dousing	Weed-Pruner Poplar , Prickly Boggart
Pick 10	Stream of Unconsciousness	Negate, Thornbite Staff
Pick 11	Negate	Morsel Theft

...With some leftover blue Floodchaser, Mothdust Changeling, and Dewdrop Spy.

Right off the bat, it looked like the majority of the drafters at the table were unfamiliar with the ins and outs of *Morningtide* evaluations; understandable this early in the format. Brian said he almost went with **Sage's Dousing** the first time he saw it, and was "shocked" it came back. I was cool towards the pick 5 **Unstoppable Ash** in a deck with very few Treefolk or Warriors that cost less than four mana, but Brian deemed the card worth some sacrifice, besides the exciting combo of championing a Battle-Axe.

Dan, despite having a clear Rogue theme in mind, seemed unsure of a few valuations of the third pack. Dan declared the pick of **Distant Melody** vs. **Morsel Theft** vs. **Cloak and Dagger**#2 the hardest of the draft. Afterwards, Dan confessed he had made the wrong pick and said he wished he had taken the second Cloak, labeling the card "bonkers". Overall though, Dan had a plan and stayed focused, taking the potentially obscene **Stinkdrinker Bandit** over the consistently strong **Fencer Clique** as early as pick one. In fact, all the Cliques went past both blue players, who each took cards that fit their deck's themes and needs better. Here are the final lists:

Brian Wong's LLM Draft

Main Deck
40 cards

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Forest 5 Island 1 Mountain 1 Swamp <hr/> 17 lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Bog-Strider Ash 2 Elvish Harbinger 1 Fertilid 1 Game-Trail Changeling 1 Kithkin Daggerdare 1 Leaf Gilder 1 Lys Alana Bowmaster 2 Lys Alana Huntmaster 1 Mothdust Changeling 1 Mulldrifter 1 Nevermaker 1 Silvergill Douser 1 Turtleshell Changeling 1 Unstoppable Ash <hr/> 16 creatures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Gilt-Leaf Ambush 1 Lash Out 1 Nameless Inversion 1 Obsidian Battle-Axe 1 Sage's Dousing 1 Veteran's Armaments 1 Wanderer's Twig <hr/> 7 other spells
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Dan Hanson's LLM Draft

Main Deck
40 cards

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Island 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Deepthread Merrow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Cloak and Dagger
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9 Swamp	1 Dewdrop Spy	1 Distant Melody
17 lands	1 Exiled Boggart	1 Eyebright's Ending
	1 Faerie Harbinger	1 Fodder Launch
	1 Glen Elendra Pranksters	1 Morsel Theft
	1 Marsh Flitter	1 Noggin Whack
	1 Paperfin Rascal	1 Peppersmoke
	2 Prickly Boggart	1 Violet Pall
	1 Skeletal Changeling	1 Weed Strangle
	1 Stinkdrinker Bandit	1 Wings of Velis Vel
	1 Warren Pilferers	
	1 Weed-Pruner Poplar	
	13 creatures	10 other spells

I disagreed with a few picks, but these two managed to find their niche and fill out what they needed. A few times Dan struggled with the classic dilemma of tribal power or enablers, but for the most part he had a good mix of early drops and reasons to play them. Brian had a rough curve but was well set up to take the late game with two strong pieces of Equipment and a monster Treefolk. Brian was particularly a fan of how the deck turned out, claiming "[this deck] could not be more real." Strong words! Not surprisingly, the entire table was caught in the eddy of chroma-confusion, with at least four of the seven players playing three or more colors. Picks do not happen in a vacuum. How did these fighters do?

Round 1: Brian versus Joe

Game 1: Joe's deck was a saucy little green-black number with the full Treefolk package. **Timber Protector**, **Battlewand Oaks**, triple **Bosk Banneret**, and **Leaf-Crowned Elder**. Joe kicked it off right with **Treefolk Harbinger** for **Leaf-Crowned Elder**, ideally on turn three off a **Banneret**. An awesome start, but Brian hit with perfect mana, using **Lash Out** on the **Banneret** to slow down the **Elder** and winning the clash. **Kithkin Daggerdare** and **Bog-Strider Ash** threatened more damage, and Brian hit the big time with **Bog-Strider Ash** into **Unstoppable Ash**. Joe's tried to keep it together, using **Gilt-Leaf Ambush** to stop the **Ash**, and even winning the clash with **Bosk Banneret**, a prime kinship winner. Yet between **Lash Out** and **Kithkin Daggerdare** and trample, Joe was critically low on life. Despite **Briarhorn**, Joe wasn't able to race the swampwalking Treefolk and Brian snatched the first game.



Game 2: Far less eventful, Joe mulliganed once and regretted not doing it a second time. Brian took advantage to run the obvious combo of **Silvergill Douser** into **Sage's Dousing**; **Exclude** always plays well. Between missing land and missing cards, Joe was cut down.

Brian 1-0
Dan 1-0

Round 2: Dan versus Eric

Game 1: Eric was at the same table as Dan and Brian and managed to pick up an extremely potent red-black Elemental deck featuring **Incandescent Soulstoke** and **Profane Command**. Dan began with a mulligan after seeing a hand of four lands and **Faerie Harbinger**, **Distant Melody**, and **Morsel Theft**; a good choice. His six weren't great though: **Exiled Boggart**, **Weed-Pruner Poplar**, and four lands. That lowly **Exiled Boggart** held of Eric's **Sunflare Shaman**, and a **Seething Pathblazer** ended up trading with the **Poplar**. **Exiled** stayed alive and **Skeletal Changeling** eventually came down to hold the fort, but Eric kept laying down Elementals, including **Ceaseless Searblades** and **Incandescent Soulstoke**. Dan was on serious flooding and kept taking stings.

One cute play midway through the game was **Seething Pathblazers** and **Sunflare Shaman** potentially combining nicely to do some hefty damage. Yet Eric let the combination go when one of his creatures died to keep mana up. The reason was revealed the next turn, when Dan played **Distant Melody** and Eric had the **Wild Ricochet!** It's not as good as it sounds, though—in the end each player drew two cards. But those cards helped Eric find **Profane Command** for massive effect, ending on the **Lorwyn** staple of **Tar Pitcher** and **Mudbutton Torchrunner**. Dan did pretty well with his flooding and **Exiled Boggart**... but the one-for-ones from Dan couldn't keep up. While there were some prowl effects, the deck really hated playing on the defensive.

Game 2: Eric, wary of these prowl effects, went with a first turn **Tarfire** against Dan's first **Prickly Boggart**. Who would have imagined making that play against a first-turn **Nightshade Stinger** in triple **Lorwyn**? What a difference a set makes.

Dan shrugged off the hit with a **Skeletal Changeling**, who came in the turn after. Eric looked afeared for prowlly shenanigans, but Dan merely passed back. Eric, under no danger, did his normal bit with **Seething Pathblazer** and **Ceaseless Searblades**. Dan went for the **Violet Pall** on the **Searblades**, but chided himself when Dan saced the target to **Pathblazer**. It looked particularly good for Eric when he got **Blades of Velis Vel** alongside **Sunrise Sovereign** for a devastating attack, but Dan didn't quit, with a topdecked **Marsh Flitter**. Eric literally slumped when

those three creatures hit. Dan put them to good use with a **Fodder Launch** of a token on **Sunrise Sovereign** and the Flitter itself trading with **Sunflare Shaman**. Eric's bearing literally *descended* when Dan played **Warren Pilferers** and brought back Flitter for another go. Out of gas and facing an army of creatures, Eric packed it up.

Game 3: Eric kicked off well, with **Sunflare Shaman** and **Incandescent Soulstoke** hitting quick. But Dan had the **Marsh Flitter**, and even though it took **Consuming Bonfire**, the damage was done. The tokens traded with the Soulstoke, and although the **Sunflare Shaman** was dealing damage, **Violet Pall** ended that. What is likely the best common in *Morningtide* created a **Faerie Rogue**, which was just grand for prowling out **Stinkdrinker Bandit** and **Noggin Whack**. Eric made a last ditch effort with another **Sunflare Shaman** but **Peppersmoke**, delicious with the in-play **Faerie Rogue**, put an end to it.

Dan 2-0
Brian 1-1

Round 3

Dan versus Peter



Game 1: Both Dan and Peter lead with **Prickly Boggart**, a card apparently in some demand by those in the know. Peter upgraded with a **Skeletal Changeling**, though, forcing Dan to trade the Boggarts. Pilferers got back the Prickly with the Pilferers themselves meeting a sick end on the **Skeletal Changeling** side, reinforced by **Bombardier**. 3/3 changeling regenerators threaten to get out of hand, but Dan had the **Weed Strangle** at the right time. Although a fairly close game, Dan pulled ahead with **Marsh Flitter** and **Distant Melody** for five cards. Peter couldn't come back from that kind of swing and Dan took the first game, doing the final points off **Morsel Theft**.

Game 2: A second turn **Cloak and Dagger** for Dan gave Dan pseudo-Troll **Ascetic** action when it snapped onto **Skeletal Changeling**. Yet Peter held things together, with **Thoughtweft Trio** from Peter taking **Eyeblight's Ending**, allowing his **Battleide Alchemist** to stick around. Peter also played a **Weed-Pruner Poplar**, which, while not good against 3/1 shroudy dudes, did fine potential work against the **Prickly Boggart** and **Marsh Flitter** stuck in Dan's hand. Dan was getting stung by **Final-Sting Faerie** until a rather sick **Violet Pall** on the Alchemist put a token into play with a quick-equip of the **Cloak and Dagger**, allowing the token to block and kill the 2/2 flier. Yet it still wasn't enough, as Peter had all the time in the world to put his black-white team together. **Quill-Slinger Boggart** is pretty slow, but if you have the time the damage does add up. Dan, still stuck playing defense with Rogues, which they *hate*, couldn't swing it around in time.

Game 3: Dan again led with **Cloak and Dagger**, but this time was short the land to power it up. Peter started off very well with **Burrenton Bombardier** and **Quill-Slinger** to Dan's naked equipment. Dan did eventually find the land he needed, with **Marsh Flitter** providing Cloakable guys and **Fodder Launch** fodder, but Peter had done too much damage. At 2 life, Dan tried to play

Brian versus Jonathon



Game 1: Brian got to live the dream: a first turn **Mothdust Changeling** with a second turn **Leaf Gilder** for a third turn **Unstoppable Ash**. Yet the Ash overstated its unstoppableness when it took on a quick **Crib Swap**. Jonathon saw the opening and went with **Doran**, the **Siege Tower** and **Battlewand Oak**. Doran was a serious problem for Brian, especially with his hopeful racing option of **Bog-Strider Ash** taking on **Weight of Conscience**. But strangely, Jonathon seemed willing to trade Doran in the fray, losing the legend and the Oak but taking out most of Brian's smaller people. The reasoning became evident soon after when Jonathon slipped out **Reveillark**. Brian was caught and had to concede the first game.

Game 2: Brian again came out well this one, using **Elvish Harbinger** to find a quick **Game-Trail Changeling**. **Silvergill Douser** and **Bog-Strider Ash**, the classic folk-folk archetype, were enough for a very speedy Game 2.

Game 3: Brian once again kicked up **Douser** with **Dousing**, providing enough tempo to do mean things with **Mulldrifter** and **Nevermaker**. Jonathon did attempt to hold on with **Nath's Elite**, but the **Douser** in play and the fliers in the air stalled that plan. Jonathon was doing adequate on the one-for-one removal package, but being behind that much life and tempo and card advantage is a tough spot to come back from. Critically, no **Doran** or **Reveillark** ever showed for Jonathon in the third

Dewdrop Spy and equip Cloak and Dagger for a critical block, but Peter had Nameless Inversion in response for the match.

game. With the deck missing its key components and already on the back side, Jonathon had to fold.

Dan 2-1
Brian 2-1

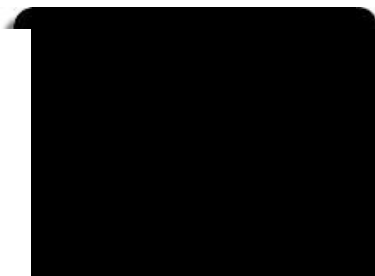
Round 4

Dan versus Peter (II)

Game 1: Peter started off reasonably with his white-red-blue deck on Goldmeadow Harrier and Kithkin Zephyrnat. That tappage allowed Dan's Deepthread Merrow to hit Peter, good enough to prowl Morsel Theft. Morsel Theft is an interesting card, with its base effect being highly variable depending on the matchup. In this case it seemed just fine, with a speedy white deck not happy to see opponent's life gain, especially "free" life gain. Perhaps worse for Peter, that Theft drew Dan into Marsh Flitter, a card that had done plenty of good things for Dan this tournament so far. Sure enough, the crush of creatures in play, along with the next-turn Stinkdrinker Bandit, destroyed the race in Dan's favor. A Weed Strangle on Goldmeadow Harrier sealed the deal.



Game 2: Peter started with Kithkin Harbinger for Changeling Berserker, which is a fine progression and a good stopper for Dan's Deepthread Merrow. A Cloak and Dagger for Dan plus Dewdrop Spy tried to get in the way of the Berserker, yet Lash Out came at the right time to get the 5/3 through. The Violet Pall did hit, but a Graceful Reprieve refreshed the Berserker along with the Harbinger. Peter was taking some hits from the Cloak and Dagger suiting up the token from Violet Pall, although he did get another swing in and ended with a fat Benthicore. Unfortunately a Floodchaser from Dan provided excellent defense long enough for the equipped token plus a Morsel Theft to take the match.



Brian versus Akio

Game 1: This round started remarkably slowly for both players as each solidified their board in the first turns. Brian's Lys Alana Huntmaster and Game-Trail Changeling were solid creatures, but so was Akio's Goldmeadow Harrier, Kithkin Zephyrnat and Kithkin Balloonist. The Balloonist got Lashed Out, while the Changeling got Crib Swapped to a smaller form. Said token became sacrificed for the greater good for Unstoppable Ash, yet the Ash was semi-stymied by Weight of Conscience. The ability was still in play, though, and in came Huntmaster with random tokens and other newly played creatures. Akio took a sizeable hit before he was able to RFG the Ash with Weight of Conscience, but it was enough damage to keep Akio on defense. This gave Brian enough time to find Silvergill Douser, Obsidian Battle-Axe, and Harbinger for Nameless Inversion, the combination of which was enough to get the concession.

Game 2: Akio again began quickly with cheap creatures with Harrier, Kithkin Greatheart and Fire-Belly Changeling. Brian Lashed Out the Greatheart and threw down a Harbinger for Huntmaster, and again Akio's offense was slowed to a crawl. The difference between the decks was clear enough. Akio's hated to be on the defensive, while Brian enjoyed all the time in the world to set up his plan. Dan was in an opposite state as well. Almost every time he had to pull back into defense mode, the prowl deck fell apart, which makes sense, of course.

However Akio wasn't quite ready to throw in the towel. Huntmaster took an Oblivion Ring, and subsequent Turtleshell Changeling was Consuming Bonfired. Akio threw down some mild offense with another Greatheart and Kithkin Zephyrnat, but the real power card looked to be the full-price Spitebellows. But Brian had the Dousing to stop that nonsense and both players continued to get lower. Benthicore from Brian looked all but over for Akio, but then came an odd play. That Goldmeadow Harrier was doing its thing the entire game, and on Brian's next turn, the Harrier directed its sights to Benthicore instead of the seemingly obvious Game-Trail Changeling.

Tough spot. With Brian at 8 life, facing only a tapped Harrier, a Zephyrnat, and a Greatheart, how much danger was there? Two hits was going to put Akio down. Brian decided to go for it and tap his Merfolk to get Benthicore in for 5. It hit, but out of nowhere, Glarewielder for Akio. That added up to exactly 8 points through the nonblockers, and just like that the players were shuffling for the final game.

Game 3: Brian curved out beautifully this game with Veteran Armaments into Elvish Harbinger into Game-Trail Changeling. Meanwhile Akio was doing all he could with double Knight of Meadowgrain. Sounds nice, but unfortunately Akio was also missing anything more than two Plains. Despite gaining lots of life early, Akio went down in swift chunks; a dull end to a tight match.



Final Result

Brian Wong 3-1
Dan Hanson 3-1

Both ended in the Top 4, good for some level of prize. Speaking with them after, both felt good about their decks and the format in general. Both Brian and Dan admitted some mistakes in drafting, and Brian in particular mentioned most of his losses on the day were due to poor mulligan decisions. Afterwards I tried to rustle up 8 for a draft, for some reason feeling the itch. No takers, so sad. Maybe next time.

Next week is something different with the first of the guest/audition authors. At this point the ball is in your court. If you like what the author has to say make sure to say so in the forums, as well as anywhere that needs improvement. This is your opportunity to get the best Limited Information possible. I'm looking forward to checking it out myself. Thanks for reading.



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