

# Ixlan Draft Guide



By KunrinG

1837 Limited Rating MTGO

PTQ Top 8 Sealed/Draft

Limited player since Ravnica: City of Guilds

Signal Pick (used often) - *A point in the pack where the card being in it should be interpreted as a sign the color(s) are open.*

# TL;DR: Top Bombs, Uncommons and Commons

## Top Bombs:

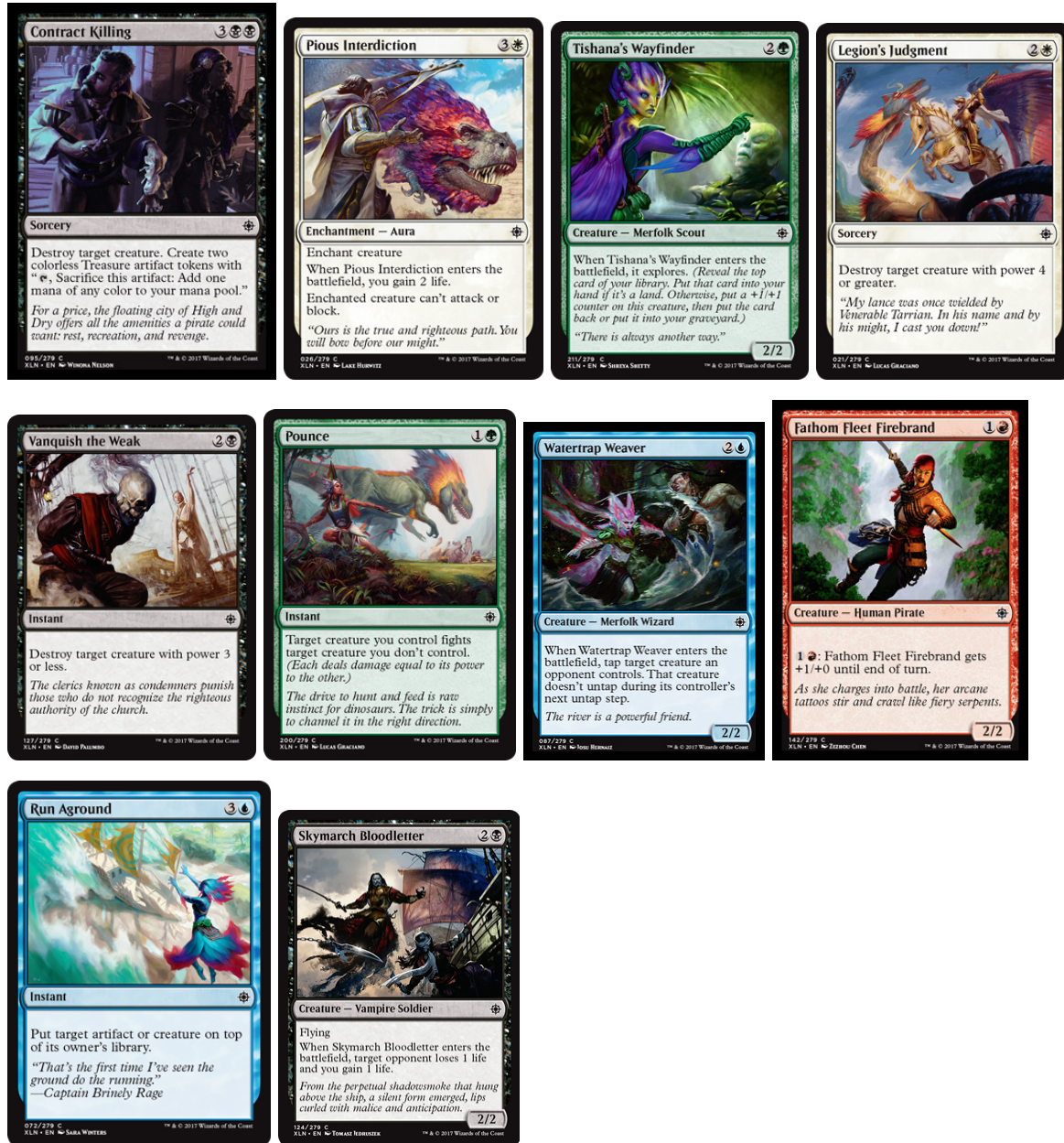




## Top Uncommons:



## Top Commons:





## Ixlan FAQ:

- Is this set aggressive or defensive? Is control viable?

This set is, as a whole, much slower than the average set. A lot of filler cards are very mana intensive and the removal is generally geared to be good against faster and smaller creatures (ie: Vanquish the Weak, Lightning Strike). Curves are going to be a big issue in the set, and having some 2-mana 2/2 options will rise in value as the drafting format goes along for all decks, including slower ones (similar to how 2/1s and 2/2s were valued in Khans of Tarkir to give you a play before your slower morphs and 3-color cards). As a whole, I'd value early plays like a 2/2 or especially a ramp creature much higher than usual, since a lot of decks are going to average their curve around 4-5 rather than 3-4, and you don't want to get run over.

- What is the best combination in a vacuum? What is the worst?

This may be the first set where blue/white has gotten basically no support. I'd avoid it if possible. Red/Green has some good commons, insane uncommon payoff, and will generally be slightly better than the other combinations in the format. Not by much - this is a well-balanced format as a whole.

- Any other notes about the set?

Yeah, the difference between the rares and uncommons is much smaller than it is in an average set. And the difference between the commons and uncommons is much larger than it is in an average set. Poor quality commons is a pretty good indicator of a slower set, so I'll add that on my "reasons the set is slow".

Also for those of you who only started recently and share my hesitancy to play auras, Mark of the Vampire was quite good last time it was in limited and I doubt that will change much.



Top Bombs  
#1. Burning Sun's Avatar  
*Signal Pick: 2*



I'm not sure if Wizards is on rotation for "color that gets the best bomb for multiple sets in a row". If so, red is feeling pretty lucky. A 6/6 for 6 is great to end games, and adding a full Searing Blaze to enter the battlefield means you are always getting great value. Will quickly win basically any game he is in, and can give you outs in some games that none of the other cards would.

## #2. Vraska, Relic Seeker



Making free 2/2s on turn 6 is much worse than making 3/3s starting turn 5, but Vraska has something Huatli doesn't - removal. As a 6 mana removal spell with huge upside, Vraska is already looking good, and adding up 2/2 menace threats to a stalled board while ticking up to the -10 is a great alternate way to win the game. Takes basically no time at all and little cost to get up to the game-ending ultimate, since oftentimes you're going to want to be making bodies anyway.



### #3. Huatli, Warrior Poet

*Signal Pick: 2*



Turns out, making a free 3/3 on every turn starting turn 5 is a pretty surefire way to destroy your opponent. She can pick off X/1s and set up good attacks, but really the place is earned on a 0 spam basis alone. Ends games insanely quickly.

#### #4. Regisaur Alpha

*Signal Pick: 2*



There are very few places where you can find this sheer quantity of stats for the price, and most of them have game-ending downsides. Regisaur Alpha is absolutely monstrous, from the 2 split bodies that make it difficult to deal with efficiently to the haste aura that immediately impacts the board. It's hard to find better bombs than this.



#5. Carnage Tyrant  
*Signal Pick: 2*



Overstatted and has hexproof. It basically will always get you a 2-for-1 or better and although it is “just a body”, your opponent being unable to remove it is a huge deal for one this size.

Top Uncommons  
#1. Thundering Spineback  
*Signal Pick: 2-3*



I hesitate to use the phrase “mythic uncommon” because most of the mythics in this set can’t compare to this. 7 mana 5/5 is medium (with the anthem attached), but making 4/4s for 6 mana at instant speed without costing a card is absolutely bonkers. The second you can untap with this card out you’re in the driver’s seat, and the game will end rather quickly due to board and card advantage. The risk of losing a 7 drop to removal is always present, but the reward of flat winning the game is always worth it.



## #2. Charging Monstrosaur

*Signal Pick: 2-3*



The comparison to reality smasher is really apt, a 5/5 trample haste for 5 mana is insanely efficient in limited and will end games quickly and easily. In terms of upfront power, there is no uncommon that matches this. Nor should there be.

### #3. Air Elemental

*Signal Pick: 2-3*



A lot of reviewers have a very hard time arguing against some of the proven uncommons. I am one of them. Air Elemental has proven to be overstated in the past and remains so to this day, and evasive threats that end the game at a rate you get non-evasive threats at are stupid.

#### #4. Snapping Sailback *Signal Pick: 2-3*



This is one of those cards a lot of limited players will look at and say “It’s big and has an ability, yeah. What else?” The thing is, 5 mana for a 4/4 is great, flash means you can eat a creature in combat (card advantage) and surviving combat after you eat a creature is very likely which means you actually just got a 5/5 for 5 and got card and board advantage. What a stupid amount of value for most board states.

## #5. Walk the Plank

*Signal Pick: 3*



The biggest condition I want on my removal is “can kill big shit”. Walk the plank fits that, even if I can’t cast it on turn 2. On 2 mana it is very good at staving off aggression, and even merfolk decks will have a couple targets for this. Very premium removal.



#6. Deathless Ancient  
*Signal Pick: 2-3*



4/4 flying for 6 is the going rate and certainly nothing exciting, but it will often win games quickly or trade off very well. The real power lies in the ability, which can constantly return this to your hand for no mana cost. Drawing a 4/4 flier for 0 mana whenever it dies is bananas. Grinding games out against this guy seems virtually impossible. Having 3 vampires is a large cost though, and it is not likely enough to be on for most decks to push it higher on this list.

#7. Drover of the Mighty  
*Signal Pick: 3*



Ramp creatures are at a premium - they let you get on the board much faster and give you something to do on the early turns that advances your game plan. Drover is all I want to do on turn 2 in most decks in this format. Getting him as a 2-drop is a much higher priority than it was in other formats. A good way to value him correctly for Ixlan is imagine him as a birds of paradise in a normal set.

## #8. Lightning Strike

*Signal Pick: 3-4*



Don't really have to talk about this one too much. Always been a signal pick 3-4 sort of card, this time it fills that 2-drop slot on the curve that makes sure you don't get completely buttfucked on your way to casting real spells. Incredibly efficient.

#9. Raging Swordtooth  
*Signal Pick: 5*



5/5 trample for 5 is amazing, picking off tokens and triggering enrage is a very significant upside. Great stabilizing play and will almost always get you ahead on board. Multicolor keeps it from being higher on this list, if you're GR already pick it up highly.



#10. Marauding Looter  
*Signal Pick: 5-6*



Attack with any creature in a turn, get a loot. Add a summit prowler's stats and you're looking at a premium uncommon. If you told me I could play a 4/3 for 4 that loots multiple times for attacking with any guy, I would tell you you're nuts. Easily the biggest reason to go blue/red.

## Top Commons

### #1. Contract Killing

*Signal Pick: 4*



I like unconditional removal, I like making my turn 6 accessible to two powerful spells. I like this card. Head and shoulders the best common in the set, despite being a bit slower than some of the other removal. When the closest thing you have to compare this to is Corpsehatch (obviously not as good), you know you're in business.

## #2. Pious Interdiction

*Signal Pick: 4-5*



Very good removal in a format all about size. Lifegain is nice as well. Despite pacifism being 2 mana, this is still efficient. And quite important for any white deck to pick up.

### #3. Tishana's Wayfinder

*Signal Pick: 5-6*



One half is a Borderland Ranger, the other half is a Nessian Courser with scry. I can't imagine a card I love more than this. Quite powerful on either half. Easily the best common creature in the pool of mediocrity, in my books.



#### #4. Legion's Judgement

*Signal Pick: 5-6*



Does much better against some decks than others, but a 3 mana Smite the Monstrous is good in a generally slower set with a lot of dinosaurs.

#5. Vanquish the Weak  
*Signal Pick: 5-6*



Great removal early, decent removal late. There are a lot of dinosaurs that actually have 3 power and something like 5-6 toughness, so hitting something like that is a huge swing. The important part is helping you survive or push damage, both of which this does well. Great limited common and one I'll be taking fairly highly.

#6. Pounce  
*Signal Pick: 5-6*



Instant speed is great, extra cost is a hit. Pretty average on the “good fight effects” list, which is important for green.

## #7. Watertrap Weaver

*Signal Pick: 6*



The great return of Frost Lynx. Punishes midrange decks that want to go tall rather than wide. The key to playing blue tempo in this format.



#8. Fathom Fleet Firebrand  
*Signal Pick: 6-7*



Much like I've said, the benefits of having good two-drops in a format that generally relies on going later is huge. FFF stands above the rest as something that can get in a large amount of damage if unchallenged, and trade up later in the game. At worst, he trades evenly. Very important sort of card to have in any red deck, aggressive or defensive.

## #9. Run Aground

*Signal Pick: 6-7*



Do keep in mind that Griptide is one of my favorite commons of all time, but that said I do have my reasons. Instant speed interacts well with combat tricks, putting it on top of their library means the board state isn't going to change on their side which gives information and also ensures that this is a "1 for 1" since it adds tempo but not to their hand. Whenever I cast griptide, I get a clear idea of what is going to happen in the game over the next turn and how to best use that. See the rebuke card for my discussion on tempo in slow formats with huge casting cost creatures.

#10. Skymarch Bloodletter  
*Signal Pick: 7*



Efficient flier with a good upside for racing. Just an overall good card.