

First, about myself. I am definitely a “grinder” as the kids would say.



You normally find me at any standard or pioneer RCQ in the Chicago/Madison/Milwaukee area. I have more top 8s than I feel comfortable revealing and this was my first breakthrough despite literally everyone I know telling me “don’t worry, you’ll get it, it’s just a matter of time.” I was previously a competitive MTG player in the early to mid 2000s, placing top 8 in IL at one point and having a few PTQ top 8s but no invites to my name. Eventually the poker bug took everyone and I got out of playing magic. Fast forward to the pandemic where my wife actually motivated and encouraged me to play magic again after seeing me watching a CovertGoBlue video. To this day, she is my #1 teammate, playtester, data scientist, and cheering section - I couldn’t be luckier. I am all the way back in on competitive play, I love it, live for it, and try to do it as often as I can.

To begin, this deck is not necessarily an out-of-nowhere meta-crusher. This is more of the Spanish Inquisition. I played the deck in the summer of 2022 to some success, nearly securing an RCQ invite at a larger event as well as other close finishes. Eventually, the meta shifted to more unfriendly waters and this deck was no longer viable which led me to shelve it for the time being. Every now and then I would revisit the idea to see if any new cards seemed to help and finally, rethinking and feeling in a rut about the current deck choices, the vibes felt right and I pulled this deck back out to throw it at an RCQ and see what happened.



Mono G Moose

Pioneer, \$283 (55 tix), MTGCaz



SIDEBOARD



Genesis of the Deck

A number of weeks ago, I was on the Stock Green Devotion list and I tried a few options at the “flex” spot and one of the options was Ulvenwald Oddity.



I played a game where I was doing the Mono Green Thing™ and hit an Oddity off a Storm the Festival and being able to flip it in the same turn. This resulted in attacking for 36 trample damage on turn 4.

After hating myself for a while having played Stock Green, Spirits, and WU Control, I wasn't satisfied, so I went back to Stock Green but tried blending that list with the previous Mono Green Stompy list I ran.



First we substituted Karn with Vivien. The thinking here is we want aggression and trample is underrated in the format currently in my opinion. Vivien granting trample can have a fireball effect with the amount of mana we can generate. The “bite” ability is also incredibly important, not having to waste a creature while also paving the way. Finally, the triple green for devotion is quite nice.

Next up, we needed to find more aggression.



I cut the Storm the Festivals and Cavalier of Thorns in favor of some friendly sneks. What I intended was making giant hydras that can't be countered or have haste, or act as removal, or become enormous - which did and does happen. What I didn't anticipate at the time was the synergy with Polukranos Reborn. The flip side provides so much extra value and protection for all the hydras in this deck, allowing you to play into wrath effects with more confidence. This obviously still has problems with something like Farewell, but it does help significantly.

Actually, scratch that, I totally knew what I was doing the whole time. See how smart I am? Absolute gigabrain 5d chess player here. What a legend.

Now for the Moose, Ulvenwald Oddity. I cannot begin to describe how good this card is in this deck. It opens everything up to making this a green fireball deck. A flipped Ulvenwald Oddity will end the game on the spot. The hydras become fireball spells. Oh yeah, did I mention Lair of the HYDRA is also a hydra fireball? If I were to run the deck back again, I would consider a third Moose because of how strong it is, but it really is hard to find room.

Our final piece was swapping the Wolfwillow Havens for Burning-Tree Emissary. The card allows for some very broken openings, such as turn 1 Elf into turn 2 Emissary, play Nykthos, use and play a Troll or Polukranos.

When you play this deck there are two modes. Mode 1 is, my board is very big and your blocks are laughable, and mode 2 is I'm going to make very large blockers until I kill you in either effectively or actually one attack. Most games you will hopefully be on mode 1, but realistically, this will not always be the case. You will also want to hold back the Voracious Hydra in certain matchups for as long as you can to kill troublesome creatures like a Mayhem Devil, flipped Fable of the Mirror-Breaker, Sheoldred, Spirit lord, etc. In most cases you will play out the Vivien, but be mindful of using the bite ability right away or using it to pump. Having access to a sideboard creature on the very next turn can completely swing a game and in most cases, opponents will do everything they can to get rid of a plussed Vivien even if it means them using too many resources.

Also, do not settle for bad hands. You almost always want to start with a turn 1 Elf or at least an Oath. The deck can be frail until it gets to a certain point, but that tipping point can be devastating. Make sure your hands are doing something proactive or are setting you up for dumb things like 20/21 hydras.

Sideboard

The sideboard is flexible to a certain extent. Some cards I wouldn't touch, like Shapers' Sanctuary is just critical for keeping up with Sacrifice. Sanctuary is also incredibly useful against spot removal decks like Rakdos mid or Izzet variations. Also note while playing your opponents use of spot vs mass removal. Some matchups you want to bring in all 3 copies, others, maybe just 1. It is not always an absolute must-have card, but it can get you across the finish line.



The 4th Mistcutter is for Spirits and Izzet decks. It can also be useful in matchups where you want/need to go fast, like Lotus Combo.



Primal Might is your creature matchup card and can help act as a fireball in some matchups. Think Humans, Spirits, Lotus Combo. It can also be helpful in matchups like rakdos (both kinds) where you NEED to kill the thing that will wreck you (Devil or Kiki-Jiki).



Vivien, Monsters' Advocate is specifically for WU. If you can sneak one in, they have a VERY hard time dealing with opposing planeswalkers. Making 3/3s with vigilance is very strong against their plan as you will have an endless stream of 3/3s vs their somewhat limited stream of 2/2s.

Tyrranax Rex is a fun include that I thought was both useful and a little memey. "RAAAAAWR DINOOOO" - Crokeyz, probably. It's also a little hard to handle for some decks. Trample haste (traste? Hample?) is no joke and it's mostly a hexproof creature for when we really want to be playing it. Excellent as a post sweeper spell or just into a growing board and can end the game giving the opponent really tough/bad decisions to have to make. I brought 1 in against Lotus and would use it against WU and would consider against Rakdos mid and sac as well as WU Boos (Spirits).

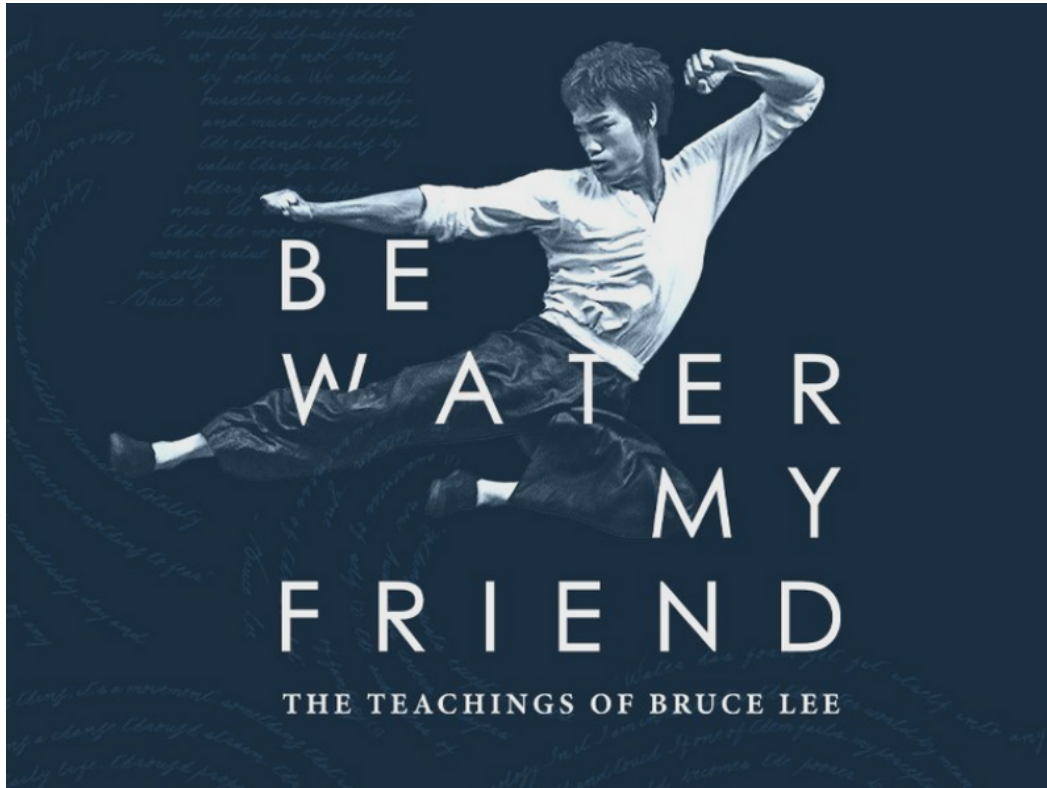
Elder Gargaroth was my MVP for the sideboard at my RCQ. I played against 3 Convoke decks and this dude just laughs at that deck. You put one in play and the game is effectively over. I could also see an argument to play it against decks like WU Boos or Humans. The meta in the Chicagoland area has contained a LOT of Convoke recently.

Ulamog is the obligatory 1-of Vivien target. No further explanation required.



The last two were a last minute change/include and I felt the most mid about them - Unlicensed Hearse and Scavenging Ooze. Threw them in because graveyard bad and I've been personally burned by Greasefang and her tricks more times in top 8s than I care to reveal.

The sideboard is a bit flexible and any kind of green creature/spell is viable based on your meta. Back to Nature, Outland Liberator, Shifting Ceratops, Questing Beast, Carnage Tyrant, Arasta of the Endless Web (amazing against Izzet Spell decks, maybe good against Boros Pia too, now that I think about it). Be the water and flow with your choices.



Now for what comes out. In almost every tournament, I create guides for myself based on my thoughts and other players I find online. For this, I gotta be honest, I went completely on vibes. I realize this doesn't entirely help. But let me try and give you some guiding principles for that.

When you're up against another creature deck, you may need to grind a bit. This means shaving an Elf, maybe an Emissary, even some number of Mistcutter Hydras. Against Convoke, I was only bringing in the Gargaroths and cutting 2 Mistcutters.

Consider the matchups and what you have time to do. Vivien is an easy cut against Lotus. Mistcutter can come out in some number against Sacrifice where they'll just steal it. Shaving 2 Elves isn't always a bad option.

Most importantly, don't forget to touch grass, breathe, and stay moisturized out there. Playing competitively doesn't mean not having fun. If you're not having fun anymore or feel like you're pushing it, it's time to take a break. I did that before this RCQ win and it helped significantly in my headspace.

Feel free to reach out with questions you might have. Thank you MTG content creators for all you do, you help keep the game fun!