

Bodybuilder's Handbuff Guide

Disclaimer: This guide assumes you are familiar with the archetype your opponent is playing.

Don't be afraid of hero power passing. Most of the time it's better to not play an unbuffed minion and hope you draw into hand buffs. Remember, you need a hand to buff!

Try to look for a balance between card generation/hand buffs. If you only keep hand buffs without card draw to support it, you'll be holding on to those buffs until turn 4-5 anyways.

Example: against raza, I wouldn't keep double first day unless I already had a buff in hand. Double glowstone is too slow without card draw because illucia can come down freely without early board pressure. Don't keep 2 of any card except the always keeps, with the exception of first day (and crabrider on coin vs aggro). Only keep 2x first day if vs aggro and against control if you have smuggler's run/grimstreet outfitter in hand already. Always toss crab rider into control because zeph into hungry crab is a card.

General always keeps

- Crystology
- First day
- Anointment

v.s. aggro

- Crabriders/broom only with first day
- Samuro
- Saronite Chain Gang

v.s. control

- Salhet's pride

Secondary keeps (If you have an always keep card already, although excluding knight of anointment)

- grimstreet outfitter
- Smuggler's run
- Meanstreet + adal going first

Note: After the nerf to crab rider, do not keep crab rider + adal

Matchups

Mage

Waker/Mozaki

-Loatheb

-Crab rider +adal/conviction (don't keep either spell without crab). You win with an early buffed crab rider or a lot of cheap buffed minions off of first day. A loatheb on turn 5 without threatening lethal or popping block often means you lose.

Max stats on board as fast as possible. Don't worry about getting good value off your handbuff cards. You can't play cards when you're dead!

If you don't draw Loatheb (v.s. waker), throw out Samuro to stall for a turn when he has 4 or more attack. He's like a psuedo-flameward. If your opponent is a potato, they won't read the card text and drop waker. Waker pings Samuro, Samuro bites back. If your opponent is smart, you either force a ping, burn spells, or cry if your opponent hits a good devolving missiles. This can potentially buy you a turn, which is often enough time to throw up stats on board, draw into loatheb, or just win. It turns out when you hard mull for loatheb while hyper cycling through your deck and your opponent plays research project, you often find him in your hand when you need him!

Example:



One more thing to keep in mind: Always leave at least one spot open on the board so you can send chargers to face. It's best if you have two open spots, because most of the time it takes two chargers to kill.

Secret

There are two ways you can play this matchup. One is to follow in your cousin mech handbuff paladin's footsteps and try to blow them up with an early crab rider into Adal into conviction. The other is to try and stabilize the early game until you can get a glowstone tech buff online. Protect your face as much as possible and only play around rigged faire game when you can.

Sometimes stopping 4 damage from the kirin tor or cloud prince hitting you is worth more than preventing RFG from triggering. Try to hold back a cheap buffed minion such as marshal, and save it as an explosive ruins tester to guarantee that your chillblade doesn't die. The worst thing that can happen is dropping a life steal charge, only for it to die before it heals you. This matchup is 60-40, favored for the paladin. If you don't draw crystology or the mage gets rigged faire game on turn 1, it's hard to come back. You can be ahead on board and have everything in your favor, but all it takes for the game to swing is a rigged faire game popping off. In one turn, the mage can draw and drop double 0 mana 5/5s and an occult conjurer. Then you don't have an answer and die to minion and burn damage from 30 hp. Matchup improves with experience.

Reno

See v.s. control above

Priest

Raza

See v.s. control above

Glowstone tech is not a keep. Useless without draw and sits in your hand anyways until turn 5. You want to apply pressure before going into your glowstone turn. If you don't apply pressure and just drop glowstone, you can bet that you're getting illucia'd. Then all your important buffed minions, all your convictions, and all your card draw is gone. But hey, at least you spent turn 5 helping your opponent kill you.

Don't be too greedy with buffs. Try to keep constant board pressure, especially after turn 6 to make it as awkward as possible for your opponent to play illucia. You can't hold buffed chargers in hand without a board.

Look for signs of an illucia coming. If you see your opponent overly committing removal tools, they're hand dumping for an illucia. For example, if they dumped raise dead (with bad minions in the pool) and wave of apathy on the same turn, it means they're trying to get ready for illucia. It's tough for the paladin to win when the priest gets Reno/Taelen in hand. It stops you from playing chargers and they can only sit in hand to get snagged away by illucia. You can't play them or they die. You can't kill them because you don't have enough burst and they have Reno.

When you do get your hand stolen, besides trying to dump your opponent's win conditions, the second best option is to play the deathrattle draws. Play taelen and play thalnos. This is better than wasting their removal (unless they have psychic scream), because it gives you a way to come back into the game.

If you plan on playing salhet's pride on turn 3, be wary that zephyrs into earth shock is a thing. Try to bait out zeph. E.g. throwing out crab rider on 2 into salhet's on 3. They get zeph into hungry crab, but you guarantee that you draw off salhet's, which is much more important. Sure,

the priest gets ahead on board. But handbuff is excellent at dealing with the priest's puny unjacked minions.

Salhet's tutors chargers into hand to buff, or finds knight of anointment which finds Adal which draws even more cards. It's like a giant domino!

By shutting down salhet's with silence, the priest just shut down a huge chain of draw for you. Sometimes it's worth holding onto salhet's so you can play it alongside broom, to ensure it dies. Against raza priests that are hard teched for this matchup (hard running silence), never throw out a naked salhet's pride even if it's mana efficient. Hero power on turn 3 if you have to.

Final note about this matchup: be wary of holding onto the coin. If you have a suspicion that your opponent has illucia, chuck the coin away. Don't help them dump your hand. Final note: It's also okay to throw out a conviction to apply pressure. If you have the choice to play another knight for draw or to push 6 damage, most of the time it's better to push the damage.

Big

-Loatheb

-Crab rider if with adal/conviction

-Cry if they have shadow essence

Treat this matchup like your opponent is a combo deck. Put as many stats on board as early as possible while playing around removals such as hysteria.

Warlock

Control

See v.s. control above

Tip: If you see voidlord on turn 5, you lost :(

Reno

See v.s. control above. Also why does void lord have taunt?

Darkglare

Very tough matchup for handbuff. Pray that they don't get giants before you can coin glowstone tech or they hit themselves low enough for charge lethal. This version doesn't run barov because there are no darkglares right now, but hard mull for him along with the always keeps. Otherwise bottom right :)

Keep angling rod on the coin. Removes darkglares and you can hold the last charge for extra reach. Remember, **the less damage you do to the darkglare, the more damage they do to themselves.**

Keep samuro. Although he won't get buff enough to kill multiple giants, he can shut down a mid-game popoff. There is no such thing as a handbuff beating a high rolling darkglare, so your best bet is to try and stabilize the mid game.

Tip from Gifmekill: it's okay to go face. Keep their health total at 11 above the mana they have. For example, if they have 5 mana, leave the darkglare at 16 hp. If they have 6 mana, leave them at 17 hp. This makes it as awkward as possible to play molten giants by forcing your opponent to have darkglare + spirit bomb (which they would have already played if they had it) if they want to play broom in the same turn. It is also situational when deciding how much you

should hit the darkglare. If you want to set up a coin glowstone turn, you need the darkglare to be as slow as possible. In other words, if you have glowstone in hand and the darkglare doesn't have an early popoff turn, don't hit them in the face at all. That way, you can guarantee their turn is slow enough for you to take a turn off playing glowstone tech.

If you have barov + broom in hand, hit them in the face as hard as possible.

Update: Since crystalizer has become a standard inclusion to darkglare, setting their health to 11+ their mana crystals no longer works. From turn 5 and onwards and with a full hand, the darkglare is almost always able to get molten giants down. There's no point in not hitting their face. Don't spend charge damage to set your opponent below 10 health for them. Make them hurt themselves!

Play around 16 damage burst before 8 mana. After turn 8, play around 20+ damage burst if possible (arcane golem PO combo or zeph).

Cute lock

See v.s. aggro above

Tip: Don't kill the tiny fins and snowflippers unless absolutely necessary. That means kill the wisps first!

Demon Hunter

Odd

See v.s. aggro above. Very favored for you! Can probably win with your eyes closed.

Paladin

Handbuff

In the rare case that you encounter another buff dude enjoyer on ladder, look for your always keeps and salhet's pride. Keeping glowstone is too risky because your opponent can snowball to a point where by the time you play glowstone tech, there's too many stats on board for you to take a turn off.

Samuro is your most valuable minion in the deck. Always keep him and use chargers to clear boards (if you have no other options) before committing your samuro. The exception is if you're pushing for lethal the turn after, but that's rarely the case in the mirror unless one player snowballs so far ahead.

If both players draw equally well, the winner of the matchup comes down to whoever commits too many resources to board into a Samuro/barov broom, or under commits resources when the other player lacks an answer and doesn't put on enough pressure to push for lethal. You can only learn this from experience with the deck.

Even/Aggro/tax

See v.s. aggro above

Tip: Leave watchposts up. Kill crab rider first, then weeblord, then mini bot. Samuro is a game winning keep that can potentially beat double call to arms.

Hunter

Beast/Even

See v.s. aggro above

Reno

Mulligan for v.s. aggro

Shaman

Murloc/Even

See v.s. aggro above

Reno

See v.s. control above

Rogue

Reno

See v.s. control above

Kingsbane/odd

See v.s. aggro above

Pillager

-Loatheb

-Crab rider with adal/conviction

Druid

Malygos/Togwaggle

-Loatheb

-crab rider with adal/conviction

Jade

See v.s. control above

Token

See v.s. aggro above

Warrior

Odd

See v.s. control above

Pirate

See v.s. aggro above. Very favored for you! Play the green cards and you'll do fine :)

DMH

See v.s. control above

Galakrond

See v.s. aggro above

Tech choices

Val'anyr- A lot of people think this card is too slow. At first glance, a 6 mana 4 attack weapon looks really bad. But in the matchups it's good in (v.s. control), it is irreplaceable. It's infinite reload. Don't want to commit more to a board that's getting mass hysteria'd or psychic screamed? Play Val'anyr for 8 damage + 4 potential damage on a charger. Odd warrior has too much removal? Play Val'anyr and suddenly every minion in your hand can be a threat that demands answers. It feels pretty good when they have to dig for more removal with coldlight oracle, which just draws you into more refill. Opponent froze your board and you can't pop block? Val'anyr!

Loatheb- Not a tech choice anymore with waker mage being the most popular deck on ladder.

Barov- Doesn't win the darkglare matchup because of raise dead. But it prevents your opponent from fully committing to the board. You can beat 1 giant. You can beat 2 giants. But you can't beat 3 or 4. Barov's only purpose is to slow your opponent down so you can buy time for a glowstone buff.

Saronite- Too easily answered by hysteria, mass hysteria, zephyrs, psychic scream, and anduin. Everything that Raza does makes this a dead card in the matchup. The double dipping of any buffs makes this great into aggro. Keeping this in the mulligan against pirate warrior, odd DH, kingsbane, and odd rogue can win the game. It can also stall for a turn against darkglare/baby zoo lock, if you want your opponent to commit more to the board before swinging back with a barov broom followup.

Scalehide- If secret mage becomes a meta deck again, 2x scalehide over marshals are necessary so you don't die to burn.

Maiev- Reno lock and big priest tech card. Can help stall long enough to win games. Also useful for stunning a big threat on board.

Wickerflame Burnbristle/Righteous protector- Tech against kingsbane, Odd DH, and aggro decks that like to hit face. Since the nerf to nitroboost poison along with the recent penflinger, change this matchup is not a problem. Very useful in handbuff mirrors, and can stall against darkglare as divine shield taunt is annoying to deal with.

Cult Neophyte- Tech card for mage, darkglare, and big priest. A well timed neophyte can win the game against these matchups. Useless against pirate warrior and decks that run little to no spells. A well-timed neophyte can win the handbuff mirror by preventing conviction lethal.

Angling Rod- Provides removal without needing to commit crab riders/brooms, as well as hand refill. Remember that you can hold on to 1 charge of the weapon for 3 extra burst damage. Don't use the last charge unless you need the value or have glowstone as a follow up.

Arcane Golem- Extra reach charger for darkglare. Works really well with conviction. A ton of burst late game with 2x argent horseriders + 1x arcane golem + conviction. Main drawback is

you are unable to reliably draw arcane golem to buff. Argent horserider can be tutored through salhet's pride, which is why it consistently ends up in hand when hand buffs are played.

Cariel Roame- Reduces cost of conviction to 0, allowing you to pop off with chargers for an earlier kill or triple chargers + double conviction on turn 10. You can run this card if you're facing a lot of control decks.

Bluegill warrior- Very effective against darkglare, horrible into the handbuff mirror. Allows you to play double charger + conviction without a cariel discount, as early as turn 5. On average, blue gills will be buffed by +2/+2 by the time they are played. A single conviction + (buffed) double bluegill amounts to 14 damage burst.

Deck Codes

Standard version:

AAEBAb7jAwL6DvvoAw66E7O7Ave8AoG9AvfQAtn+At3+ApWmA8rBA5XNA57NA5HkA8zrA+PrAwA=

Teched for aggro:

AAEBAb7jAwT6DpvLApPQA/voAw26E7O7Ave8AvfQAtn+At3+ApWmA8rBA5XNA57NA5HkA8zrA+PrAwA=