

Sideboard Guide for Esper Control by harmonywoods



Esper Control

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Land 21
 Artifact 2
 Creature 12
 Enchantment 2
 Sorcery 12
 Instant 21
 Planeswalker 5

27

11 9 2 4 1

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7+



SIDEBOARD



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Sideboard cards and their purpose:

Fatal Push: These are here for matchups versus tempo, where having additional removal is very nice. I chose these over prismatic ending because they're more efficient versus many threats such as Barrowgoyf and Orcish Bowmasters.

Grafdigger's cage: Reanimator and Oops are big decks. End of story. Otherwise, it's pretty unusual to bring it in. When you bring it in, always cut Snapcaster Mage.

Hydroblast: RUG and Izzet Delver and Red Stompy are very important decks in the metagame, and hydroblast is great versus them. In particular, cori-steel cutter is a great target.

Dress Down: Urza's Saga decks, Doomsday, and Oops

Sheoldred's Edict: This is chosen over alternative removal options for it's ability to kill Kaito, Bane of Nightmares.

Barrowgoyf: This is nice as an added threat versus controlling decks as well as a large lifelinking body against more aggressive decks such as delver and red stompy.

Force of Negation: combo

Narset, Parter of Veils: Beans and Doomsday are both largely rebuffed by this.

Matchup Sideboarding:

Red Stompy:

+2 Fatal Push +2 Sheoldred's Edict, +2 Barrowgoyf, +2 Hydroblast +2 Force of Negation

-2 Inquisition of Kozilek -4 Thoughtseize -1 Kaito, Bane of Nightmares -1 Stock Up -1 Ponder -1 Teferi, Time Raveler

We take out the very bad discard and trim some of the clunkier cards to bring in our interaction suite. We cannot trim too much or else we won't be able to pull ahead, but this should be fine.

Oops:

+2 Grafdigger's cage, +2 Dress Down +2 Force of Negation

-1 Sheoldred's Edict -2 Bowmasters -2 Snapcaster Mage and one of -1 Kaito, Bane of Nightmares or -1 Stock Up (either is fine)

A lot of your boarding is going to depend on their plan - if they're not on a creature pivot at all you can cut more of the removal (though Boggart Trawler et al beats are surprisingly real so i would not go down to less than 3 swords). If they are on a creature pivot, keep more in. We do not trim Teferi due to it not allowing the opponent to cast Pact of Negation

Dimir Tempo:

OTP:

-4 Force of Will -2 Thoughtseize

+2 Fatal Push +2 Sheoldred's Edict +2 Barrowgoyf

OTD:

-2 Force of Will -2 Thoughtseize -2 Inquisition of Kozilek

+2 Fatal Push +2 Sheoldred's Edict +2 Barrowgoyf

Our sideboard map is a little messy, but the matchup is good. Deciding whether to play into daze or not is very important. Thoughtseize is kept in over Inquisition in respect of Kaito, Bane of Nightmares.

Temur/UR/Grixis Delver:

OTP:

-4 Force of Will -4 Thoughtseize

+2 Fatal Push +2 Sheoldred's Edict +2 Hydroblast +2 Barrowgoyfs

OTD:

-2 Force of Will -4 Thoughtseize -2 Inquisition of Kozilek

+2 Fatal Push +2 Sheoldred's Edict +2 Hydroblast +2 Barrowgoyfs

This matchup is wonderful. Save hydroblasts for important spells if possible (cori steel cutter, price of progress, seek the beast)

Generally in this and dimir, you should play around daze especially on the play, but sometimes your hand or situation will not let you do this. It is important to see when this is the case and be willing to throw caution into the wind and repeatedly play into daze.

OmniTell:

-4 Swords to Plowshares

+1 Sheoldred's Edict

+2 Force of Negation

+1 Narset, Parter of Veils

This matchup is perfectly fine. We can apply pressure with the discard, and their deck's failure rate when disrupted in that way is very high. If it is a mistrise village variant, you should aggressively counter set-up spells like Stock Up. Draw step Thoughtseizes w Teferi if you can assemble it is (as usually true versus combo) game-ending

Sneak and Show:

What I said for the OmniTell matchup holds, but instead of boarding in Narset, bring in hydroblast and trim Kaito. You can also trim Kaito or Stock Up more to make room for more plows. It's effectively the same matchup.

Blue Painter:

-2 Kaito, Bane of Nightmares -2 Inquisition of Kozilek -2 Thoughtseize

+2 Fatal Push +2 Dress down +2 Sheoldred's Edict

This is the matchup I currently feel the worst about. Dress Down is a recent addition that should help with Saga. Some variants will want you to bring in Force of Negation for Karn or TOR

Red Painter:

-4 Force of Will -2 Kaito, Bane of Nightmares -2 Orcish Bowmasters

+2 Dress Down +2 Hydroblast +2 Fatal Push +2 Barrowgoyf

This is comparatively reasonable, but still disadvantaged. Some variants will want you to bring in Force of Negation for Karn or TOR here as well.

BUG Beanstalk:

-2 Force of Will -1 Thoughtseize

+1 Narset, Parter of Veils +2 Barrowgoyf

You should try to disrupt them with discard and land threats (Kaito in particular) and kill them. This matchup isn't super good but I do think its quite close.

Nadu Midrange:

-1 Force of Will -2 Kaito, Bane of Nightmares -1 Ponder
+2 Fatal Push +2 Sheoldred's Edict

I feel fine trimming a force due to the fact that I prefer to interact with discard and removal anyway and Delighted Halfling is very good at bypassing it anyway.

Breakfast:

-2 Kaito, Bane of Nightmares -1 Murktide Regent -1 Ponder
+2 Sheoldred's Edict +2 Fatal Push

We don't board in dress down due to there not being any worse cards. We also don't bring in grafdigger's cage for much the same reason. If you wanted to trim something other than Murktide, Stock Up is a reasonable choice.

BG Reanimator (and in general fast reanimator):

-2 Snapcaster Mage -1 Kaito, Bane of Nightmares -1 Stock Up
+2 Grafdigger's cage +2 Force of Negation

We keep swords in due to it's ability to handle most jukes. If Stronghold Gambit or other red cards surface, we can cut Teferi Time Raveler for Hydroblasts. Dress Down can also be sideboarded in versus chain of smog, but that's a somewhat dubious proposition due to how clunky it can be otherwise.

Doomsday:

+2 Dress Down +2 Force of Negation +1 Sheoldred's Edict
-2 Kaito, Bane of Nightmares -1 Ponder -2 Swords to Plowshares

We board in our interaction and cut some of the clunkier cards. We keep some removal for creature pivots, but upgrade a swords to a Sheoldred's Edict in respect of flipped Tamiyos and Jace, Wielder of Mysteries-based piles..

Mirror:

-4 Force of Will -3 Thoughtseize
+1 Narset, Parter of Veils +2 Sheoldred's Edict +2 Fatal Push +2 Barrowgoyf

This probably isn't a very realistic thing to be worried about, but if you do run into it I would do this. Just better interaction and a couple good threats.

Forge Combo:

-2 Teferi, Time Raveler -1 Sheoldred's Edict -1 Kaito, Bane of Nightmares
+2 Force of Negation +2 Dress Down

Take out clunky cards, add in more forces and a way to deal with constructs.