

I play a lot of Draft in Eternal, and while I haven't hit Masters, I like to think I have a decent feel for how to draft and play at this point. I had a bunch of random tips in my head that I really wanted to put on paper, both for myself and for anyone looking to get into it, so here they are:

Drafting

Drafting and playing Draft are two very different skillsets, so I'm gonna break this roughly into 2 different sections (with a bunch of subsections). First, we'll talk about picking cards out of packs:

- First and foremost, you want to **draft a functional deck**. When you have at most 9 games with a deck, nothing feels worse than losing because you couldn't make a single play from turns 1 to 4. Conversely, most 7-win decks are going to get at least 1 or 2 "free wins" because you could play cards early and your opponent couldn't. Most of these other tips will be about drafting decks with consistency, well, consistently, so try to keep that in mind.
- And to help that consistency, **draft 2 colors**. The absolute number 1 deck killer is not having enough cards to make a deck where >90% of the cards, particularly earlygame cards, are in 2 colors. You should pretty much settle on your colors by the end of pack 1, but you can potentially put it off all the way to the end of pack 2 if you're having trouble reading the packs. But absolutely no later unless you're in a really weird situation.
 - Yes, this means you will end up passing a Twinbrood Sauropod or Lethrai Ranger in pack 4 sometimes. Draft 2 colors.
- Splashes should be small, unless you've already picked up good fixing, particularly Seek Power or, if you're in Time, Amber Acolyte. Non-main Strangers and Banners also allow you to splash more heavily, but this is a delicate balancing act, as it can easily lull you into the situation I described above.
 - This doesn't mean you should avoid splashing at all costs. 1-influence cards in particular can be absolute bombs that fit perfectly in your deck and push you over the edge. 2- and 3-influence non-main cards should be treated with caution, as splashing up to that consistently is extremely tough.
- Draft is a Tempo-oriented format. More often than not if one player has a play on turns 1, 2, and 3 and the other player misses 2 or more turns, that player will win. Drafting for early-game consistency will get you more wins than trying to build around difficult to use bombs.
- In that same vein, if a card costs 6 or more, ask yourself if it actually fits in your deck. It's very easy to draft 6 or 7 huge bomb drops but never get to play them because you neglected to find a way to survive until you could play them. Sometimes there will be no good lower cost option available, and remember that you can always cut big drops out later, but be very careful.
- On the opposite side, all but the very fastest decks will want at least a few 5+ cost bombs to finish up games. Bold Adventurer is a great card, but it's not going to win you the game in almost any circumstance. Fourth Tree Elder is extremely expensive, at 6JJ,

but a 6-mana flying unit with 6 health and endurance will both win you the game on its own *and* completely stop an aggressive opponent dead.

- Start building intuition. This is a tough one, because it requires you to play a lot of drafts, but basically, you'll want to get a gut feeling for pretty much all of the commons/uncommons, essentially a personal ranking of "is this card good or not." You develop this just by drafting the card and playing it, or seeing other people play it and remembering how good it was.
 - Trust your gut. Your personal ranking will be different from someone else, but they don't play the game like you do. You'll be able to strengthen your opinion on what cards are good by playing them more, figuring out their strengths and weaknesses.
 - Don't try to go all absolute tier-list. Every card has a deck it works in, and there are too many cards to really form a perfect ranking of each in your head. Intuition is the key here, so work to develop it.

Pack Reading

This will take some explanation, but basically, the packs you draft are not generated for you at random; instead, they're drafted by other players first and then passed to you. Specifically, when you pick a card from your first pack, the rest of the cards in that pack are shown to another person as their second pick, and then another person as their third pick, and so on, until no cards are left. The key is that the same person is seeing all the picks that you make within the pack, and you're seeing the cards leftover by the same person picking before you.

Basically, when you draft, other human beings have already seen these packs and picked cards from them, and you can generally assume they are building a coherent deck with certain colors. If the 3 people directly ahead of you are all drafting Rakano and Combrei decks, then you will probably not be seeing any green, and few red/yellow cards, but there will be tons of blue/purple cards just waiting for you to pick, so you might as well go Feln.

To become a better drafter, you'll want to get better at reading packs and making educated guesses what the people ahead of you are picking. With that in mind, here are some pointers:

- Generally you can start to get a feel for what the people ahead of you are picking about 4 picks into a pack.
- To improve this skill, just look at what colors are left about 3 picks in and try to make a guess. As the pack continues, adjust your guess with each new set of cards you see. You'll be surprised how quickly you'll zero in on the most open colors.
- Now some more specific tips: if you get passed a **rare** on your 2nd or 3rd pick of a pack, pay special attention to it. If it's a good card, you can basically be completely certain the person picking immediately before you is not drafting cards of that color, and that you have a decent chance of picking up some good cards in that color.
- Similarly, try to get a feel for the highest value **common** cards in each color, for example Torch, Towering Terrazon, Finest Hour, Cobalt Acolyte, and Lethrai Ranger. These cards

will appear in a lot of packs and if you see them drop past pick 5 or 6 in a pack they're both a sign that the color is open and a ridiculously high value pick late in the pack.

- As you play more you'll get a feel for what commons are high value signals like this. For example, when I see a late pick Minotaur Grunt, I'll always ask myself if I can afford to go justice, because it's an incredibly powerful 2-drop that I often see much later in packs than I feel I should.

Power

Power is the backbone of your deck, and it's important enough to warrant its own section here. Power and influence will singlehandedly determine how heavily you can splash, how many heavy influence cards you can play, and can even help you make a fluky 3-color deck into a 5+ winner, so take note:

- 16-18 power is the standard for almost all draft decks. Think very hard if you want to go out of this range. As for what you want specifically, you'll just need to play more and build up an intuition for what a "16-power deck" looks like vs. a "17-power deck"
- Cheap power-seeking cards (Seek Power, Amber Acolyte) can be swapped in for power cards 1-to-1, so if your deck has 2 Seek Powers and an Amber Acolyte, you can count them as 3 power cards before you even get to your power cards. Just remember that you need at least 15 actual power cards for the deck to be legal.
- More expensive power-seeking/ramp effects should not be counted as power. Remember that the first 3-4 turns are crucial; Minotaur Ambassador and Amaran Archaeologist are too expensive to help you avoid power drought.
- The Favors, which fetch specific color mana from your deck, don't exist in Draft. Don't go looking for them.
- Neither do Seats, so again, don't count on them.
- If you've already settled on your core colors, draft Banners of those colors fairly highly. Don't skip great on-color drops for them, but don't take filler that might or might not make your deck, or even decent splash cards over them. Ditto for core color Strangers.
- Banners/Strangers in only one of your core colors should be regarded with suspicion, and only really drafted if you know you'll be splashing that color. Literally don't play a Banner with a color that isn't in your deck at all, just play a sigil instead. 1-color Strangers might make it into your deck, but only if you're hurting for 2 drops or are a crazy person who drafted a Stranger deck.
- On the flip side, if you know you're going to splash for some bomb you picked up in pack 3, draft the fuck out of Strangers/Banners with core+splash colors. Seriously, pick them extremely highly, because if they let you keep the consistency of your deck **and** get your very powerful splash card out at the same time, they will win you games.
- Cheap card draw (eg. Levitate, Inspire) is worth about half a power, on average, so if you have 2 Inspires you can basically count them as 1 power card, for your 16-18 count.
- The value of **Monuments** is basically dependent on how good the card it turns into, but it's important to understand just what Monuments represent, in terms of deckbuilding, so let's go over that real quick. [TODO later, sorry]

- With all that out of the way, here's a draft ranking of the Monuments as they are currently:
 - Cobalt Monument - Absolute bomb, a 4/4 Flier is good at basically any price because it will win you the game
 - Amber Monument - Absolute bomb, again, a 5/5 Overwhelm will trade well and threaten to finish the game if not answered
 - Emerald Monument - Pretty good, as a +3/+3 buff to almost anything will make it a much more relevant lategame unit in draft. Still has the weapon problem of if you don't have a unit on board it's a dead draw, and it fails the vanilla test, but if you're already in green the flexibility it provides is good enough to justify it
 - Amethyst Monument - Decent, but while a 3/3 Lifesteal body is good, by the time you play it it risks being irrelevant
 - Granite Monument - Awful, don't draft it. A 4/1 with charge can die to basically anything, and at 5 cost it's going to be really difficult to find situations where this card is a net positive for you. Even in more aggressive fire decks it's hard to justify this

Playing Games in Draft

Of course, having a good deck is just half the game. You have to know how to play the decks you draft, and you have to know the peculiarities of draft mode vs the various constructed modes, as well. In this section I'll try to give some tips about how to improve at playing the game overall and specifically in draft. These tips are mostly about helping you improve at the game, so that rather than reacting to specific situations, you will be able to adapt to the near-infinite number of scenarios draft can throw at you, and play in ways that turn situations in your favor before you even need to make tough decisions.

- Learn the 1-cost fast spells. All of them:

http://www.numotgaming.com/cards/?filters=true&search=fast&search_in%5B%5D=name&search_in%5B%5D=type&search_in%5B%5D=text&view=grid&cost=1&cost_operator=%3D&types%5B%5D=Spell. This will serve 2 purposes:

 - You'll stop playing around Torch so much. Or rather, you'll start to understand that if they didn't have a torch when they floated mana on turn 1 they probably won't have it when they absolutely need it on turn 4.
 - It will help you to start reading pauses. When the game pauses to let your opponent act, *always* try to guess what card is in their hand, starting with the 1-mana fast spells. If your opponent plays a shadow power turn 1 and does nothing, then you play a unit and the game pauses, you can be 100% certain that they have a Swear Vengeance in their hand. You won't be completely certain of most other things, but as you practice prediction more and more you'll get a really good feel for what cards are in your opponent's hand based on the forced pauses in the game, and this is the best way to learn, IMO.
 - In practice, you'll usually mostly see the following:

- Torch
 - Finest Hour
 - Levitate
 - Swear Vengeance
- They're a good place to start, but try to at least be aware of all cheap fast spells. Sometimes you'll think they have a Torch but they actually have a Temper, which screws you in a 1-health situation. Protect is also a very important card to remember, because it will completely screw you in certain situations.
- Of course, this is just a starting point. Learning to read hands will, over time, win you more games than anything else you can do while playing. Literally any time the game pauses to let your opponent take action, try to guess why that pause is happening. Use their current power and influence to start, and then start breaking it down to what actions they can possibly take at this point, eg.:
 - Backlash can only be used in response to you casting a spell
 - Finest Hour can only be used when there are minions on the board
- Try to remember the reads you made early on, both to know if you should be playing around them and to confirm or debunk your suspicions. If you always try to read your opponent's hand, you'll start to develop an intuition for what fast spells/ambush units people draft more often, and when they play them.
- Try to develop intuition even without pauses. If your opponent is in Shadow, has 2 power available, and seems to want to run an Oni Ronin into your Lumen Defender, ask yourself if you can afford to let that hit face, because even if you haven't seen a single pause yet, you can assume they have a Rapid Shot in hand. If they do, they'll kill your Defender and still have that Ronin on board, quite possibly ending the game then and there.
 - However, if you've been paying attention to reads, and saw for sure that they didn't get a pause last turn when they had 2 mana up, call their bluff. They might've just topdecked it, but more often than not they're bluffing for a free warcry/face damage.
 - If you choose not to block, make sure you pay attention to whether the game pauses or not after you declare no blockers. This can confirm that they're bluffing, but even if the game does pause you don't necessarily know they have it, since it could be some other spell. This is where the real game begins, and where you have to decide just how many warcries/how much face damage you're willing to give them for free before you call them on it.
- Eternal's pause system is one of its deepest, most interesting elements. As you start climbing ranks into silver and gold, you'll start to encounter players making the same reads I'm telling you to make here. **You can use this against them.** These are some high level techniques that you shouldn't worry about when you're just learning the game, but will turn you from a newer player with solid fundamentals into a real-deal threat who can break into gold and diamond every month:
 - Try to keep track of what your opponent knows about you from your pauses.

- Try to keep your own pauses where you won't be taking action short. A good enough player will always notice them, but at the same time, it can't hurt you to try to hide that torch in your hand
- Start playing to avoid showing pauses at all. For example, playing Red, with an Oni Ronin on board and a Torch/Rakano Outlaw in hand, on turn 2. Normally you would want to attack first with the Oni Ronin and then play your cards afterwards, but doing this will make the game pause to ask if you want to play Torch, letting the other player know with pretty high certainty that you have that Torch. If you instead play the Rakano Outlaw and then attack in, the game won't pause at all, which means your opponent won't know if you have a Torch or are just bluffing. This will win you games, straight up.
- This is classic advice for any drafting format, but don't play around rares and legendaries. Like, at all. Deal with them as they come up, and if the only thing that could possibly lose the game for you is Harsh Rule don't empty out your hand, but in general, don't make a move expecting that they have anything rare or legendary
 - For perspective, you will see 544 cards when you draft. Of those, 4 are guaranteed to be rare or legendary, in the first pick of each of your 4 packs. In practice you'll see 1 or 2 more rares in each pack, but that'll be about it, and the further down they get passed the worse they are. In the absolute maximum scenario, we're talking 1 rare per pick, or 48 total rares in your draft, around 9% of the total cards you draft.
- Conversely, this means draft is a game of commons and uncommons. The way a faction plays in draft is almost entirely determined by its pool of common and uncommon cards, so you'll want to focus on them when trying to figure out what you should be playing around. Know the very good commons/uncommons for each color, and do assume your opponent is running at least some of them. A lot of this will require you to build up intuition, but it's useful to keep in mind.

Tips for Drafting More Often

A lot of this advice is centered around playing more drafts, which can be tough if you're a newer player who has trouble building up the gold for draft runs. Here are some tips for helping you earn gold, none of which are super high level, but which can be useful to keep in mind:

- First, \$20 will get you 2200 gems, which is 4 draft runs (500 gems each). However, doing these 4 runs will also get you gold without you having to spend it, which means even if you're just average you will always get enough gold for 1-3 extra runs on top of the 4 that you bought. I'm not saying you have to buy gems for draft, but it's good to have an idea of the money-to-time ratio that Eternal sets up.
- Daily quests are free gold. If you're more interested in gold, 2 silver chests are only about 100 less gold on average than gold chests, so don't worry too much about trying to roll your quests into gold-chest-givers
- When it comes to actually playing, the most important thing is to **play a deck you enjoy playing**. Ranked mode shouldn't be a slog or you won't keep playing it. Even if you

mainly play the game for Draft, like me, Constructed is a good place to learn fundamentals, and shouldn't be viewed solely as a way to grind out gold.

- That said, purely for the purposes of getting money for draft, faster decks will be better. You get the same amount of gold for winning a 5 minute game as a 20 minute game, after all.
- Try to pick a deck and stick with it. Ideally, have a main deck that you enjoy playing just to get some ranked wins out of the way and earn some silver chests. This will take away the stress of trying to play the meta and let you just focus on the one deck you're playing right now.
- If you have no idea what to even start with, I have a suggestion.
 - For cheap, aggressive set 1 archetypes, it's hard to beat Rakano (Red/Green) and Stonescar (Red/Purple). You should be able to ask someone in the Discord for help building one, and while there are some important Uncommons and a few Rares in either, they should be relatively quick to build even on a totally fresh account.
 - For set 2, I, uh, haven't really played enough ranked to say. I may update this later if some other newbie friendly list comes around