WOE Limited 100k Tournament Report

Jason Ye

Introduction

Hi all! I'm Jason Ye, aka JasonILTG in a lot of places (Twitter, Discord, etc). I won the 100k this past weekend in Vegas, securing a PT invite and a $15k prize (after splitting the prize in the finals)!

The format was all Wilds of Eldraine limited: 8 rounds of sealed day 1 with a 6-2 cut, two pod drafts on day 2 with a clean 12-2 cut to top 8, and finally one last top 8 pod draft.

Testing

I'm pretty happy with the amount of preparation I did for this event - not the most time I've ever put into a set, but I felt pretty confident going in.

One of the first things I did this set was just basically force five-color soup in Bo3 on Arena, as that was the archetype that I really wanted to explore. You can see my full 17lands history here - I wasn't winning too much, but I was learning quite a lot. Some of my big takeaways from this include:

1. Power is more important than fixing. With so much fixing available in green, red, and colorless, it's actually quite easy to get a good enough manabase. It's much harder to ensure you have high power cards to make all the splashing worth it - so that's what you should prioritize in draft
2. Good adventures are key high power cards. There are quite a lot of 2-for-1s that are hard to make full value of if you're not splashing, and they are all quite worth splashing for. Basically all of the gold uncommon adventures fit into this (except Hart). There's also some premium gold cards you can get later and splash (Johann is huge, but also Greta and Sharae)
3. Soup decks aren't ramp decks. Hamlet Glutton is a slight underperformer here, and Return from the Wilds is a huge underperformer. Since you're weaker early game from taking time to fix mana and playing 2-for-1 adventures that are naturally slower but more powerful, it's not worth it to take even more time off to ramp to a singular big payoff that folds to removal.
4. Fixing ranking goes something like Utopia Sprawl > rare manlands > Brave > Faun > Wilds and first Grotto > Flick and Thief > Prism > Giant > Scarecrow > Vault

I was also part of the Sanctum for All testing team for Worlds - almost entirely as someone to help with limited, I didn't really do much for Standard. We did a bunch of in-house pod drafts, using Draftmancer for drafts and then playing games on MTGO and/or Arena. Shoutout to Cain for completely crushing those.

Right before the Open, about two weeks before Vegas, I attended the content creator limited meeting that Marc Anderson organizes every set. This meeting is primarily for the purposes of Arena Open prep; it's never really prominently posted anywhere, but the (unedited) recording is publicly available here. That was extremely informative, as always - my main contribution there was, of course, on the topic of 5c splashy decks.

Finally, about a week before Vegas, the Sanctum Worlds team sat down and had a few limited meetings. The first one was a more informal draft log review session - as always highly recommend those for prep, it's very nice to hear how others' perspectives on picks differ from yours. The second and third were more formal - these were your classic limited meetings, where you discuss every card and its place in the format.

This was the final ranking we settled on. The point and context of this ranking is to serve as a P1P1 pick order. So, while the cards are ordered top to bottom within columns and left to right between columns, the rares/mythics are not ordered between themselves, as you will almost never have to decide between two rares.

Approximate descriptions of columns:

1. Better than Imodane's Recruiter, and thus every other uncommon/common
2. Very good rares/best uncommons
3. Better than Torch the Tower, and thus every common
4. Top commons
5. Other maybe-first-pickable commons
6. Worse than Evolving Wilds
7. Pretty bad, try to avoid
8. Rounds to unplayable

Then there is a gap - the two columns to the right of the gap are the gold/buildaround column and the sideboard column, respectively.

I don't agree with everything here - this is an aggregate of the discussions we had around every card, and there were some differing opinions. But I do like where we ended up, generally!

Day 1 - Sealed

Here is my sealed pool from day 1 (except I'm missing one bonus sheet card, not sure which one but probably not relevant). Notably 7 rares because the Bivouac is foil.

I think this was a fairly straightforward build, don't really see many directions other than just playing the 23 best RB cards. Notably I didn't play Prism because I had two Thieves and a Grotto and only two things to splash.

Here's a deck photo from the event. Sideways row at the top is notable sideboard - second Whisper was nice to have against really slow decks, and two catapults were amusingly good in a couple matches.



Round 1

Beat RB 2-0 on the play pretty quickly. Boarded in Kindled Heroism, out Ranger.

Round 2

Beat RG splash Goose Mother 2-0 on the play, they got mana screwed game 2.

Round 3

Won a close 2-1 vs RB on the draw, they had Shrouded Shepherd and Song of Totentanz and it generally seemed like a pretty even match but game 3 they mulled to 4 (and me to 6). I almost drew game 1 with Rankle's Prank but they blocked correctly and killed me.

Round 4

Had a deck check, won 2-1 on the draw against a deck with 2 Expel the Interlopers and the mythic red dragon. Very close match, boarded in second Whisper and out Ranger.

Round 5

Lost 0-2 on the draw to a solid Temur deck. They didn't have anything super special but it turns out my deck is a lot better against clunky curves with bombs than streamlined decks without. Cards just didn't line up.

Round 6

Beat a UR deck 2-0 on the play. Sided two catapults in, taking out ranger and something else I forget, because they showed two torches and no other removal and wanted the game to go long.

Round 7

Beat a multicolor blue deck that sided into straight UB 2-0 on the play. I sided in catapult and out ranger again, but it was worse because of them siding into UB (and if I knew they would then I wouldn't have sideboarded)

Round 8

Beat Tom Martell 2-1 on the draw, boarding in Whisper against black Virtue and a lot of 1-for-1 removal. Had a perfect Scoundrel make a treasure->Butcher make a rat->Recruiter adventure->Thief+Recruiter curve in game 3.

Day 2

So, going into day 2 I'm 7-1, which means I need to go 5-1 across the two drafts to make top 8. Feeling pretty good honestly, I have a lot of confidence in my ability to do well in high level drafts.

Draft 1

This draft was pretty weird, and honestly felt a bit softer than I would've expected. I guess day 2 draft 1 still isn't that tough. Matt Nass was passing to me, and Carl Chase (twoduckcubed) was passing to him.

I started out taking P1P1 Sleep-Cursed Faerie, and then got passed a second one P1P2. So at that point I was very locked into blue. I then got a bit of decent green - one of the Scavengers and a Brave, I think - along with a Sentry, a Bitter Chill, and some medium white cards (that are mostly up in the sideboard above).

P2P1 was Hylda, and from there I took every tap payoff I saw basically - and I got quite a lot. I also got Yenna in pack 2 I think. Pack 3 gave me a second Sentry and a second Bitter Chill, as well as the foil Huntsman's Revenge.

Only thing I felt like I was missing was a bit more interaction, specifically of the kind that could get a creature off the board. I don't think I passed any lightblades I could've reasonably taken, though maybe I should've taken Curse of the Werefox higher too.

Here's a picture of my deck, along with a link to the whole pool:



Round 9

This deck felt pretty busted, but sadly I lost this match 0-2 on the draw because my opponent had an even more busted GW deck with Recruiter, Archon, Three Blind Mice, and all the good GW uncommons. In addition, they had two Gingerbrute, which is the exact thing that my deck is weakest against, because those are very hard to race in an auras deck. Boarded in Moment of Valor, out I forget, probably a Prowler.

Round 10

Easily won 2-0 on the draw against a GB deck with three Gluttons, probably this deck's best matchup lol. Boarded in Diminisher Witch and Moment of Valor, out both Prowlers

Round 11

Won a tense 2-1 on the draw against a UR deck with many catapults, which are pretty annoying against this deck because I can never get tap triggers by tapping them. Lost game 1 to the catapults, won game 2 by drawing both Sleep-Cursed Faeries early and just killing them quickly with those plus two Sanctuaries despite missing green mana, and finally won game 3 just by lining up my tap payoffs well. Not sure I boarded in anything.

Draft 2

So going into draft 2 I'm now 9-2, which means I need to 3-0 this draft in order to make top 8. I'm again in a pod with Carl, again he's passing to an old pro who's passing to me, this time Tom Martell. Still feeling good tbh, I just had a certain kind of subtle arrogance/optimism energy this tournament for whatever reason.

P1P1 is Goose Mother, P1P2 I see Song of Totentanz in the pack with an uncommon missing. So at this point my thought is that Tom Martell took a Recruiter, since that's the only uncommon I would take over Song. (I think what actually happened is he took Gingerbread Hunter, which is also reasonable though I wouldn't have personally). Because I think Tom Martell has a Recruiter now, I also think that red is likely to be somewhat contested, but I just note that and still take Song because it's good even on the splash (of course Tom ends up on GB but Carl is amusingly mono-red so red is in fact cut off to my left lol).

The rest of pack 1 I don't get anything too amazing in a vacuum - this pod feels a lot tougher than the first draft, more along the lines of what I expected in terms of tough competition. I think I pick up one or two Tomeseekers this pack, a Back for Seconds, a Quick Study, and maybe a Scavenger? Also maybe one Evolving Wilds and one Grotto. I pick up a couple Curiosities on spec, but those don't go anywhere. I end the pack with some good blue cards, a couple draws into Sultai with Goose Mother and Back for Seconds, and a Song of Totentanz to splash.

Pack 2 I open Talion, then take Greta and Spellscorn Coven, so now I'm thinking I'm maybe UB base. P2P4 I see Evolving Wilds vs a Obyra, and decide to take the Wilds - I'd rather keep myself more open and try to wheel the Obyra, and besides I still want fixing for Goose and Song. Sadly the Obyra doesn't come back, but I get two Scream Puffs, Troyan, and some medium filler. I end the pack looking more like UB base, but still incentivized to be Sultai because of my gold cards.

Going into pack 3 my main concern is finding cheap interaction - I already have a good amount of power and fixing, I just need to be able to interact. Sadly I don't see much in my colors, but there is quite an interesting line that comes up (note that these might've been 1 pick later than I remembered, unsure):

- P3P2 I see a Threadbind Clique. Now this is a very powerful card, and is good interaction, which I really want! However I feel that my mana is already a bit stretched and don't love adding my fifth color, so I pass it for a sultai card and am sad. (I think this or the next pick was maybe where I got the Faun; at this point my only fixing is two Wilds one Grotto, the Wilds are also more awkward with adding a fifth because they need to be locked in to one color instead of being true five color lands)
- P3P3 I see a Kellan's Lightblades, and again I want to pick it up! But again I don't love adding white to my deck, even though I do really need cheap interaction. I pass it for a sultai card (second Scavenger maybe?) and am sad.
- P3P4 I see a Kellan's Lightblades again, but this time there's also a Restless Fortress in the pack! There's also another reasonable pick that isn't white, but this time I think for a long time and take the Fortress. My reasoning is that, while it isn't exactly the interaction

I'm looking for, it is still a strong card, and most importantly it's a lot lower cost to play that in my deck than a white card. Plus, it also helps me cast any white cards I might get in the rest of the pack! And at this point I'm hopeful that maaaybe there's an off-chance that I wheel one of these two Lightblades (sadly, I don't, as the pod values them correctly).

- P3P5 I get rewarded for my Fortress pick with another Threadbind Clique! And I think I get a Syr Armont a bit later as well, very nice.

I think this series of picks is probably one of the most interesting and important decisions across all three drafts. There's a lot of factors to weigh here, and in the end I'm not sure if I took the exact optimal line, because well, how can you be sure about that? But I do think that taking the Fortress where I did instead of taking a medium card was worth somewhere around +1 game win's worth of equity - it felt quite pivotal, despite being fairly late in the draft.

My first impression of the deck I ended up with is that it's what I would cheekily call "high upside" - the mana is a bit inconsistent (I tested this a bit with some sample hands/goldfish games), but with a bit of luck it is quite powerful. I'm a bit worried the card quality isn't quite as high as I'd like, but that's going to be the case for everyone in a pod draft of this caliber.

Here's a picture of my deck (except there's 5 forests, not 6), along with a link to the whole pool:



Round 12

I beat a RW deck 2-0 on the draw, partially because they mulled to 5 in game 2 and didn't find their second land. It was still a game because I didn't find my fourth before they found their second, but the early tempo certainly helped. Didn't sideboard anything in.

Round 13

I beat Tom Martell on BG 2-0 on the play. Game 1 I fall behind a bit to start but then play a Song for X=4 or 5, which forces him to play a lot more cautiously. That gives me time to then play a Tomeseeker to get back Song, then find another Tomeseeker and play the third Song for lethal!

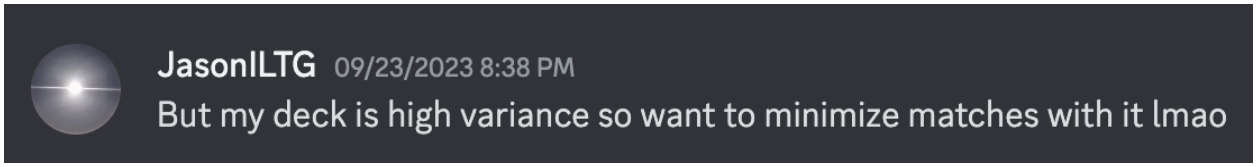
The ping from Familiar is pretty bad in the matchup and Song is harder to make work on the draw, I side out Song, mountain, and one Prowler on the draw. In addition, I want to be able to be grinder vs his big creatures, so I side in Duel, a second Cream Puff, and a second swamp.

Game 2 he's falls behind early, and is able to pop a Defense of the Heart, but it isn't enough and I outgrind him, largely thanks to my sideboarding decisions.

Round 14

One last match for the top 8 and PT invite! This time a UG deck, with counterspells and Hatching Plans. I don't really get a good look at what their deck is doing though - game one I beat them pretty easily as they don't have any plays before turn 5 or 6 really (I think they're missing a second blue source), and game 2 the Duel and Scream Puff I side in again do quite a lot of work. 2-0 on the draw, and into the top 8 and PT!!!

It's really funny that I 3-0 6-0'd this draft, given that right after deckbuilding I was telling friends that I didn't really have that much confidence in this deck. And I really didn't! I was optimistic and of course played to win - I described the deck as "high upside" - but I do legitimately think it had a bunch of holes and could've fallen apart and 1-2'd with worse luck. I even asked a friend to do math for if I could split the last round, citing this reason 😛



Mostly dodging red aggro was very nice, but I think also I just overestimated how good my opponents' decks would be. Pod draft with good players is always tough and scrappy.

Top 8 Draft

Going into the top 8, I'm 6th seed from swiss, so I know I'm going to mostly be on the draw. I don't really change how I draft based on the information? I don't tend to draft decks that need to be on the play anyways. But maybe I should, idk

Of course I'm very happy to be in top 8 and qualified for the PT, but also of course I'm still aiming to win - still have that arrogance/optimism I mentioned before. So we go to the draft!

There's a lot less to say about this draft tbh. It was mostly a pretty straightforward UR draft, where I took Goddric and Johann early and was able to table Catapults that the pod wasn't prioritizing. I also just staked my lane pretty quickly and got rewarded with a solid deck.

I guess there were two interesting draft picks. The first is that I took Cruel Somnophage P1P3 - I don't think this is that interesting personally, but I know a lot of people don't think of Somnophage as a good card. It's just really solid - unlike some recent Lhurgoyf variants, it grows twice per trade instead of once, and just being an adventure creature is also upside with various spell payoffs or things like Edgewall Inn.

The other interesting draft pick was that I got a P2P12 Evolving Wilds. I know there was a drafter at the table that was mono-red… but this pick is pretty egregious. There's no way Evolving Wilds is the fourth-worst card in any pack.

Oh I guess one thing: at some point I take Forced Fruition in a late pick pack 1 or 2, and then after that I tiebreak on late picks with no cards I actually want by taking cards that can kill Forced Fruition in case I want to side it in 😛- I never actually do, though.

Here's a picture of my deck, along with a link to the whole pool:



Quarterfinals

I'm on the draw against a pretty solid green white deck with Yenna, Spellbook Vendor, and an Expel I only see in game 3. Game 1 I win a grind by answering their threats repeatedly with two Catapults in play.

I side in Diminisher Witch and Freeze in Place to deal with their bigger creatures, siding out Water Wings and The Witch's Vanity because I didn't see much removal or 2s (I didn't see Vendor until game 2)

Game 2 I lose quickly to a Yenna + Cooped Up I just can't answer. I side put Witch's Vanity back in and take the Freeze in Place back out.

Game 3 was streamed! You can find it here, I'm on the right. They do nothing much and then cast an Expel, but I build back pretty easily and a well-timed counterspell takes down the match.

Semifinals

This match was streamed! You can find it here, I'm on the right. I'm on the draw against a midrangey Mardu deck that has a bunch of removal, black Virtue, and an Expel the Interlopers - but pretty mopey creatures. Game 1 I mostly just lose to a Virtue I can't answer. So, I board in Break the Spell, Scarecrow Guide, and plains, and take out Succumb to the Cold, Water Wings, and island.

Game 2 I win with Catapult and Johann as always - amusingly the Break the Spell I side in is even better than I thought because they also have two Grasp of Fates. At some point I point I put Monstrous Rage on top face-up with Alchemist while Johann is in play, and on their turn they try to deal 5 to it, playing into the face-up trick - they just forgot about it.

Game 3 they stumble a bit, and I get three catapults on board. They look resigned, and cast Expel just to kill my catapults, along with their creatures - in response, I give one my catapults -4/-0 with Attendants adventure, just to get 3 damage in. The Expel resolves, and I go to put all my catapults in my graveyard - but a judge stops the match and goes to confer with another judge for a moment. They come back, and tell us that, actually, -3 is in fact less than 0 - most of the time negative numbers are rounded to 0 for the purposes of doing math, but this is not one of those times - so I get to keep a catapult. It really doesn't matter too much, but it was a pretty funny interaction.

It turns out Catapult is good against a deck that can't attack past them so just has to spend good removal on them lol. I win the final game pretty easily, so onto the finals!

Finals

This match was streamed! You can find it here, I'm on the right. I'm again on the draw, against a classic UB faeries deck - interaction and cheap flyers. We decide to split the prize before the match - instead of winner getting $20k and loser getting $10k, we both get $15k (though we have to coordinate this). I considered declining the split offer tbh, I'm still feeling arrogant - but I think it's honestly just generally good practice to split because money is nonlinear.

Game 1 is pretty quick, I stick a Johann and then a Goddric with counterspell and Water Wings backup. Monstrous Rage pushes a bunch damage with Goddric, and after they remove the Goddric I have a Somnophage plus Alchemist to get back Rage for lethal. Amusingly they die to exactsies by trying to use Attendants to fight my Monstrous Rage instead of cracking a food, but then getting that countered and thus growing the Somnophage.

I don't side anything in - my deck is basically where I want it for this matchup. Game 2 is very close, with a lot of back in forth as I race their faeries with my three catapults and Johann. Succumb to the Cold does real work here, saving me 6 damage from the top of my library. I think they miss lethal on the last turn - I assume the stress got to them - and I ping them to death with any spell off the top for the (metaphorical) trophy!

I don't think this draft was anything special - just a really solid deck and clean gameplay, enough to take down the pod. I guess one note is that Catapult gets a lot better in scrappier pod drafts compared to Arena league drafts, when people aren't going to have those streamlined starts with Cut In or tricks.

I will say, one simple advantage I felt like I had throughout the whole event was just a very good physical/mental game. I made sure I was fed and watered the whole day, making sure to eat when I needed and keep my water bottle refilled. And I also just tend to always have a good mental game - always optimistic, always pretty relaxed. I really love high stakes limited.

Conclusion

I'm on the pro tour!!! Very nice to win a big event like this, nice to know my limited expertise is real 😃

Thanks to all my friends who supported me throughout the weekend! Even if I'd scrubbed out early it would've been a great weekend just for getting to hang out with so many wonderful people.

Also, big shoutout to Sanctum of All, excellent testing team, always a blast!

Oh and one last thing: be sure to look out for the next Limited Levelups podcast episode, I'll be on there talking with Alex about how our weekends went, and WOE in more detail than I can go into here!