

So for the trios I ended up testing a lot of Modern/Pioneer, and not Legacy which I was playing. I have a mountain of Legacy practice under my belt, so a week of grinding leagues probably wasn't going to help all that much.

My cousin Josh was our modern player, and he was out of practice. He had some experience playing UR Murktide, but he loved playing Phoenix when looting was legal. I tested a lot of versions and felt the deck was good, but not better than any of the other modern decks. I liked the core of the deck, but didn't like Demilich all that much. The deck felt too all-in to me, and sometimes you'd "go off" and put a 3/2 and a 4/3 into play. Every deck will beat that easily. I tested some TiTi versions, which felt too slow. And I tested a version with Bonecrusher Giants/Borrowers. The idea being that the adventure creatures would give us a reasonable midrange game that also fit our main plan. It wasn't very good. The biggest takeaways from all that testing were...

1) Lava Dart is 10000% better than Gut Shot.

2) Brazen Borrower is essential. Without Borrower, you get clowned by Murktide Regent. You can't reliably get rid of it maindeck, and the idea of playing some kinda rope-a-dope game with phoenixes on defense is a fantasy. Borrower is the perfect answer to this.

We had given up on the deck and were testing UR and URw Murktide builds. We kept running into a brick wall of Elemental decks which we couldn't beat. It wasn't until we saw the Gaze Murktide version that we picked the deck back up on a whim.

The real creators and pilots of the deck did a podcast episode here. They deserve most of the credit.



<https://twitter.com/FaithlessMTG/status/1441442363256176652>

We played the deck with no changes and realized that WOW GAZE IS VERY VERY VERY GOOD. It's hard to explain just how powerful this card is in this archetype. But once you start casting it you'll understand immediately. We also realized that T1 Gaze>T2 Murktide was winning most of our games. And that Murktide was plan A, and Phoenix is plan B. The original list we tested didn't have borrowers and was playing Ox which we found we kept boarding out.

We were winning a lot and quickly spiked a 5-0. We were crushing the winners metagame of Murktide/Hammertime/Cascade Combo - and the deck was proactively powerful enough that our strong starts could steal bad matchups.

Even though Borrower/Ending/WearTear gave us game against graveyard hate, we still wanted a way to sidestep postboard. Aria of Flame was the first thing we tried, and after seeing how well it worked we quickly added the third copy. And no DemiLich is not good against graveyard hate. DemiLich is good against graveyard hate in the same way that Grizzly Bears is. Yes Grizzly Bears are unaffected by RIP. But nobody cares because Grizzly Bears is bad.

The final additions we added to the deck were to put some pieces of countermagic in the main deck, and play an extra white source.

At first we cut the Radical Idea for an Izzet Charm, which we liked even though Radical Idea is uniquely good in the deck. Then we decided to get cheeky and cut a cantrip for a maindeck spell pierce. The pierce has been good, but we're probably getting too cute.

We liked Hermit when we played it, and I wouldn't dissuade anyone from playing the card if that's your jam.

Here's where we are right now with the deck.



My cousin played the deck in the modern main event day 1, and scrubbed badly.

1) The deck is HARD TO PLAY. Like really fucking hard. Every cantrip matters and you have to constantly reevaluate at every step. You also need to think extra hard about managing your mana in the early turns of the game in case you need to lean on Lava Dart. And yeah, I/we'd crush MTGO when both of us were playing the deck. But I think the deck was a little bit outside the reach of my cousin. Even though he is a strong player. He doesn't eat/breathe/and crush MTGO the way many of us do.

2) He hit a hostile meta and ran cold. This is probably my biggest takeaway from the tournament. Paper magic is not MTGO. For most paper modern events, most people are just going to play whatever their deck is. Like the top 20% of players will adjust to the meta and optimize their decks. But round 1 you better be ready to play against the Bloodbraid Elf -> Endurance guy.

The next day Josh decided to just jam Jeskai Murktide for the Trios event we won.