Introduction and deck selection: To get started, me and someone who I met a few times previously (Joseph Cruz) both won our local RCQ together. He asked me about a testing team for RC Atlanta and shortly after I shared with him a list of Neoform Atraxa and told him this is certainly what I'm considering. He tried it himself and he was on board, so we worked together on the list.

After the Wizard's B&R announcement, I knew I would still play the deck too. My testing time was very limited and the only thing it told me was I wasn't allowed to pivot to Mono-Green, a deck that I thought was trending down anyway.

We added and subtracted some cards and landed on the list below (Will go over future cards at the end):

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RC Time!

Round 1: W vs Amalia combo 2-0

I was lucky enough to play this on camera. Link is below

https://www.twitch.tv/videos/2005824726?t=00h02m30s

It was funny how they suggested many plays and I did something else entirely. I don't think I made any misplays in the game though, maybe I should've let the Chord of Calling in Game 2 resolve, but otherwise I think I played well and the deck looked pretty good in that spot.

Round 2: L vs Bant Spirits 0-2

I didn't expect to see this at all. I've had good luck vs this matchup historically, but I fully think that was luck driven. I punted game 1 pretty badly. My opponent had ShackleGeist, Spell Queller (holding fatal push) and Smuggy C. I have Tasigur and a 2/2 Elemental (from Skyclave). Both attackers are lethal. I draw a Fatal Push. I force the issue by pushing the Shacklegeist, but he Quells it and I am just dead on board. If I attack, he has 2 lines. 1: Cast SQ for no value, tap down Tasigur, and have good blocks on the 2/2. I then chump attack, and he has to block. I can then cast Fatal Push killing the queller with push, then kill the shacklegeist. Line 2: He blocks both my creature, me killing his Smuggy C with Tasigur, and him killing my 2/2 token. He likely is forced to cast Q for no value to try and close with a top deck lord, but I can then push his Queller with FP then kill another creature and be way ahead. Oh well….

Game 2 I lost badly due to having 3 mana confluences and the opponent having a fast interactive hand.

Round 3: W vs Amalia Combo 2-1

Admittedly I don't remember this match, but I am able to win.

Round 4: L vs Amalia Combo 0-2

I make a lot of errors, dexterity and brain. I accidentally shuffle Jegantha in my deck in game 2 and in that game I made 1 or 2 other mistakes and fully earned this L.

2-2

Round 5: W vs Amalia Combo 2-0

Funny to keep running into this deck. This was another sound win. As I told Tannon, the matchup is good!

3-2

Round 6: W vs Rona Combo 2-0

As I guessed this was an easy matchup. They are on average an entire turn slower to execute the combo and all of our cards are very good in the matchup.

4-2

Round 7: W vs Angels 2-0

This kind of reminds me of Pio decks vs old Mono green devotion. If the green deck gets to the "snowball" point and casts a bunch of spells and has 12 devotion and pass, you won't be able to break through. Angels are the same if they have a wall of flyers… so I didn't want that. Fortunately, my cards lined up pretty well and I was able to put my own angel in play. With my heavy attacks I was able to keep them well below the 27 magic number and soon enough they were forced to chump block to stay in the game.

Game 2 was similar. It helps that they are naturally amazing vs Phoenix so they don't respect it postboard with RiP, so I didn't have to deal with that either.

5-2

Round 8: W vs Amalia 2-0

Opponent jokingly goes “is this the good or bad Jegantha deck”, picks up my decklist and goes “OH!”. Good fun.
In game 2 he has “soft combo”, which I call when you get to Amalia without being able to attack but gain 60ish life. I have the answer and can reload with Atraxa. I eventually kill him with attacks from Atraxa, Jegantha, and a Delve threat in 17 point swings and win over several combat steps. Soft combo is not a win vs us fortunately.

Round 9: L to Phoenix 0-2 (CCR)

I met him earlier in the tournament and he is a pleasant person. I’m glad I got to meet him. I told him what I was on earlier and I was glad that in Round 9 I got some sort of “validation” of being at the top of the room with him with my deck. I did tell him early on that I did like the Phoenix matchup… but I liked it less after he cleaned my clock with it.

Game 1 it takes a while, but I have access to a lot of mana and I cast thoughtseize, taking his prismari command and I leave him with a fiery impulse, jwari disruption as his spells (he knows his top card via gaze). Then I cast 3 mana Atraxa and unfortunately don’t find a stubborn denial. I take the 4 cards it finds and go ahead and fatal push the phoenix that is in play. His turn he essentially miracles Treasure cruise, lightning ax’s atraxa pitching phoenix, then fiery impulse to kill atraxa. Then reanimate the phoenixes and kills me for exactzies. As I write this I realize better lines, like leaving a fatal push for the following turn and surviving at 3 life. Alternatively, I could’ve taken the Fiery impulse, since he was a little light on mana and leaving Prismari Command is a heavy mana commitment that would’ve been really tough to storm 3 for the birds, although possible.

Game 2 he makes quick work of me and gets a good 2-0.

In hindsight I think the matchup overall might be favorable pre-board since CCR had a single spell pierce which is basically the norm. Postboard they always have a pile of blue spells that come in, where we have the mystical disputes and duresses that help, but I think Phoenix is favored in postboard games. Still, the matchup is close, I just didn’t get there and CCR played really well and deserved the W 100%.

Round 10, 1-1-1 vs Engmatic Fires

I win game 1 as he has the bad cards in the matchup in hand. He also can’t find good spells and I win.

I lose Game 2 as he has a Kenrith with open mana to threaten reanimation. I have a few turns where I am forced to delve away good cards. I concede and we have 11 minutes on the clock left.

Game 3 I am way ahead with Jeggs, Atraxa, and Glissa in play. Opponent is top decking and I am about to close and I have stubbs in hand. Should have this locked away.

His top deck…. Cavalier of Dawn. That kills Atraxa first, then with an active fable, kills Glissa. He doesn't have time to close so we draw instead. Looking back, that was probably the only card that saved him in his deck. Maybe a few others, but still. Had there been no timer, he would've certainly won.

Day 2:

Round 11: 2-0 vs UW Control

Game 1: I am able to stick an Atraxa and hold up Stubborn Denial. He doesn't find a sweeper in 2 turn cycles and I win via combat damage.

Game 2: In the early turns I let Narset resolve. Instead of force spiking it via Stubborn Denial, I let it resolve and flash back Gaze to continue setting up my future plays. Since he's tapped out, I put Glissa in play. He misses land drop 4 and passes. I attack with Glissa for 3, and then remove a counter from Narset (Glissa's least relevant mode) which kills her. He removes Glissa with Get Lost, and still misses land drop. I have the mana to Thoughtseize, take Change the Equation (only counterspell), then cast 3 mana Atraxa, then Thoughtseize again to take his Verdict. He concedes right after he draws a card, knowing he has nothing left.

Joseph asked me later about letting Narset resolve, as I had the stubborn denial in hand. I didn't mind that as much, as I knew Glissa would be resolving next turn anyway, which is a bigger threat than Narset. I thought stubborn denial would be better later so that's why I let it go.

I sweat the matchup but it felt strong at that moment. It's honestly probably a close matchup.

7-3-1
Round 12: Unofficially 1-1, Officially L 1-2

Game 1 it takes a while but I lose in a long game. About 26 minutes remaining on the clock….

Game 2 is a back and forth match. He casts Hullbreaker Horror and I have no way to remove that. Both Hullbreaker and Hall of the Storm giants are lethal attackers, but he doesn't find a castable spell to work as a "bounce" spell to attack for lethal. Also with Atraxa being an 8/8 it will win combat vs either card, so that is a big help. I have my cards face up for time reasons, but he never knows what the mystery card is, which I've had since at least turn 3. He casts Supreme Verdict, and Hullbreaker bounces itself back to hand. I respond with the best Golgari Charm of my life to regenerate Atraxa, which is a lethal threat.

With 2 minutes on the clock we don't even try for Game 3. I ask for a concession but he declines. I concede to him, since a draw eliminates us both. If I could go back I might take the draw, since that eliminates a person for an old friend who is still very much alive in the

tournament, but instead I put him one win closer to getting a RC Denver slot (I have mine so I'm not playing for it).

Final Card choices:

As I said above Joseph Cruz and I were putting together a final list. Here are the notable card's absent and cards that we included:

Delve Creatures: I had a 4:3 split of Tasigur / Hooting Mandrills. I've seen the split go either way, and I've seen a playset of both. For me, cards like Otherworldly Gaze make it easier to find either one, so the 8th copy doesn't matter that much to me. On the split going this way, oftentimes green mana is the toughest to come by, and there are plenty of times where you will cast the creature and immediately neoform it away. So, requiring UBG is an easier ask than having UGG, so I would rather have more Tasigurs. Hooting Mandrills I think is often the better creature as the keyword trample comes up as being relevant to get just enough damage through. Tasigur's "flavor text" of getting a card does certainly come up, so that helps too. I probably did that about 4 times in the event. It's good.

Consider/Otherworldly Gaze: This is something that I argue about with other players who run the deck. The slots do compete with each other. I believe the first version of the list had 2 Consider and 3 otherworldly gaze. After the B&R with the threat of Smuggy Copter I said straight away "I want 4 fatal pushes", and consider was the most cuttable card. We added the 4th gaze at some point too, as Joseph validated my opinion too of "I just want more copies of that card". On the last hour of deck submission, we were trying to make room for a card (Card X) and I suggested "Why not cut the consider, promote the 2nd Heartless Act to the main deck, and then we can have 'Card X'?" He agreed, and the last consider went into the "not played" deckbox.

2 Heartless Acts / 0 For the Throat / 0 Power Word Kill: This I can bundle all together. Most of these decklists had 2 2 mana spot removal cards split in the main and sideboard. In the paragraph above we made room for the second one. With the unban of Smuggy C, I didn't like the thought of Go for the Throat. Before the banning it was the prominent card, but I didn't like it post bannings. I was actually thinking about Angels being a deck, and some of my local players did play angels too, so I didn't want power word kill either. Heartless Act I liked because at the time I didn't think the downside was that bad, and we could potentially get a free win vs Rakdos if they played the Archfiend by removing 3 counters. With Amalia being as popular as it is, there can certainly be scenarios where there is a counter, nullifying heartless act. I think moving forward, I would still run 1 Heartless Act and I would also run 1 Power Word Kill /1 Abrupt Decay/ 1 Fading Hope. It is somewhat meta dependent, but for now I think my first copy of a spot removal card would still be Heartless Act. Decay is somewhat limiting, but it gets around the ward cost of Amalia and still removes mostly all cards that you might be scared of. Fading Hope I've run before and I do like it, but with Wail of the Forgotten we have bounce effects.

Manabase: Just putting all manabase things here. For a while I had 0 basic lands with the attitude “UW is a rough matchup, so I don’t care and I want better mana”. That is a poor take and instead UW is close and it is among the best decks statistically so we should run at least the first basic, and it should be an island. Also, it is basically mandatory to run 4 mana confluences in my opinion. We have so many symbols at the top right corner of each card and not that many actual numbers there, so we need to ensure that we have our colors. Just play 4.

Sideboard:
2 Golgari Charm / 1 Wilt: Initially we started on 2 Golgari Charms since all modes can be impactful. Against Convoke, we can easily deal with the 1/1 tokens that they might deploy. It deals with Rest in Peace + Leyline of the Void. Finally, I straight up won vs UW control because of the Regenerate mode. It’s a strong card.

Specifically, I knew Phoenix was going to be a targeted deck, so there would be RiPs and Leylines around, so I mentioned the potential 3rd “naturalize”. Wilt was something Tedaboy mentioned in a list before and it’s nice that if it’s not a game where the graveyard will be touched or that mode doesn’t matter, then cashing it in for a different card seems quite good. This was “Card X” above, and I’m glad we brought it into the sideboard.

2 Glissa: This also is a naturalize on a stick too. The draw a card and lose 1 life mode when connecting is awesome and is a must answer threat vs control and fires decks. We did consider a card like Reckoner Bankbuster, as that card will draw 3 cards and will attack in big chunks too. I do like this card against certain aggro strategies since it will always win combat, so Glissa was the choice.

4 Ray of Enfeeblement: You must play the first 3. The fourth was certainly good because of the Amalia decks I saw. With Amalia, convoke, and greasefang being good decks, I would want this card.

0 Other 7 Mana Value monsters: Dragonlord Atarka is a notable card that has been in the deck. I think its effect in a ton of spots is only slightly better than Atraxa, so it’s hard to justify it for me. Toxrill / Hornet Queen are both similar to Atarka as they can stabilize, but Atraxa still reloads the hand for other interactions so I don’t quite like them here.
Hullbreaker Horror initially was the card in the sideboard for the mono-green matchup. If you can do that and cast spells, you can stop them from doing anything. The problem is if you lead with Hullbreaker, you might have 1 spell left, so it might be mediocre right after you cast it. Also, we aren’t a tempo-y deck list Creativity that can just have a bunch of spells afterwards to interact everywhere, so I don’t like it that much. We are probably the worst at using hullbreaker horror.
Also, this does turn off Jegantha as a Companion, which having access to Jeggs can be very strong in those same matchups, so there is a cost there.

Overall Final Thoughts:

I have no regrets running this deck and I wish I tested with it more. The list I would run locally is below:

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As you can tell, it's literally one card change: removing the second heartless act for the first Power Word Kill. I think after Atlanta Angels gets worse so we can shave some percentage points there but always be ready to kill Amalia with a counter or not. I'm still worried about artifact creatures, since they still exist outside of Smuggy C, so the split is strictly to cover more bases. As we continue going through Pioneer, we will know if we want 3 spells to deal with gy hate and if Glissa is a little noodle threat that we want for control-y decks and everything else.

Regardless, I think the foundation is great and I strongly recommend it!