

CZ0520: SCARIEST COMMANDERS TO PLAY AGAINST

- 1) UPKEEP STEP
 - 2) MAIN TOPIC
 - 3) TO THE LISTENERS
 - 4) END STEP
 - 5) CLEAN-UP PHASE
-

CLAP AND SLATE

- 1) INTRO JIMMY & Rachel

@jfwong - **@wachelreeks** - @commandcast

Over the years, there have been many Commander boogiemen. These are the legendary creatures that you know to treat with extreme prejudice when they're in the Command Zone across from you. Zur, Sharuum, Narset, Derevi, Najeela, Tergrid... but with the huge influx of legendary creatures lately, that list is longer than ever before. Today we're talking about the scariest Commanders to play against lately, BUT FIRST:

****CARD KINGDOM** **ULTRAPRO #1** **PATREON: AUSTIN MORRIS****

- 2) **MAIN TOPIC: SCARIEST COMMANDERS TO PLAY AGAINST**

We could've broken them down into any number of categories: difficult to interact with, fast combo decks, insurmountable value, etc. But today we're sorting them by the amount of time you have before they become a lethal threat. How long can you let these Commanders "do their thing" before they will kill you or win the game.

1 TO 2 TURNS

These are often Value Commanders, especially those that snowball. As long as you are keeping up with the amount of mana or cards they have, you have a little time but don't let their plan go uninterrupted for long

CHULANE, TELLER OF TALES

- There's no value Commander quite like Chulane.
- It may be a few cards and a few lands now, but Chulane generates exponential value.
 - The more triggers, the more mana to trigger even more
 - One turn is probably fine, but do not let them storm off or get enough creatures to cast a Craterhoof.
- Watch out for creatures that bounce themselves or have powerful ETB effects.
 - Shrieking Drake, Whitemane Lion
- Watch out for "it's time to have a 30 minute turn" cards
 - Panharmonicon, Cloudstone Curio

MARWYN, THE NURTURER

- But also elfball in general
- Elves get out of control fast
- One removal spell won't change things, dig for a board wipe.
- It'll be very difficult to control the amount of mana they have. Remove draw engines or mana sinks.
 - Guardian Project; Ezuri, Renegade Leader; Allosaurus Shepherd
- If you can't find a board wipe, a well timed bounce spell can also help (Cyclonic Rift, Wash Out)

OMNATH, LOCUS OF CREATION

- You can respond to the ETB trigger.
- You can also respond to landfall triggers.
- This is a ton of value for absolutely free
- Try to limit land drops and get rid of fetches whenever possible
- The life gain adds up so it'll be difficult to take out with combat damage unless you go over the top. Consider commander damage as a long term plan.
- Remember it hits planeswalkers as well

PROSPER, TOME-BOUND

- Most powerful treasure commander?
 - Compare Magda, Malcolm, Tivit
- Card advantage and ramp in red and black makes Prosper a very powerful storm commander
- Many ways to turn treasure into damage or card advantage
- Tends to go unremoved for FAR too long

NEXT ATTACK AT YOU

These are Commanders with powerful attack abilities that can take players out of the game on one attack. They may not need to be removed if they swing at another player, but be ready when they come for you. They become much scarier with haste enablers or protection. Beware Lightning Greaves!

KALAMAX, THE STORMSIRE

- Gets infinitely large with any Fork effect.
- Always block Kalamax
- Careful of fling effects

SCION OF THE UR-DRAGON

- Scion isn't super scary until it's coming at you.
- When it is, it will usually be 10+ power and have infect

KAALIA OF THE VAST

- Kaalia isn't the deck it used to be, but it can still be explosive if left unmanaged for long.
- You can usually handle a hit from Kaalia, but who KNOWS what's getting put into play.
 - Gisela, Blade of Goldnight; Master of Cruelties; Vilis, Broker of Blood; Bloodthirster; Balefire Dragon
- If you can't remove her before she attacks, dig for a board wipe. One spot removal spell won't be enough.
 - Lightning Greaves / Swiftfoot Boots make Kaalia a nightmare to deal with
- Luckily Kaalia going off draws attention. Enough to turn it into an archenemy game early.

SATORU UMEZAWA

- If Satoru is on the board, you just can't get hit by any of their creatures.
 - Blightsteel Colossus; Ancient Silver Dragon; Silent-Blade Oni; Sphinx Ambassador
- It's the secret part that's the scariest thing about it. They could have *anything* in their hand so it's always safest to just remove the unblockable creature or keep Satoru off the board.
 - Slither Blade; Changeling Outcast
- Is often scarier than it actually pans out to be.
- Deck needs a lot of mana generators to really keep the pressure up

MIDROLL POINT

NEXT UNTAP

These are Commanders with powerful effects that either:

Need to attack to trigger. (The main difference between this category and the last: It doesn't matter which player these Commanders attack. If they get to attack, it's going to be bad.) They become much scarier with haste enablers or protection. Beware Lightning Greaves!

Or are at their most powerful when they have access to more mana. They may get scarier the turn after they come down because of an upkeep trigger or a need for more mana. They become much scarier with doubled mana.

YIDRIS, MAELSTROM WIELDER

- One turn with a Yidris trigger is enough value to feel insurmountable.
- The deck is often full of Cascade cards that will hit each other and continue the chain
- The easiest way to keep the Yidris down is to keep it from connecting. To anyone.
- Cascade is tricky to keep up with. It make take the whole table to counterbalance the value

NARSET, ENLIGHTENED MASTER

- Depending on the Narsset build—feel free to ask them what kind of deck it is—one attack is enough to win the game.
- Decks are often designed to take extra turns and combats until they are extremely far ahead or have knocked everyone out.
- You can never count on a deck like this to whiff, you'll lose more often than not
- You'll need a way to get around hexproof: Board wipes or edicts, Shadowsear

NAJEELA, THE BLADE-BLOSSOM

- Assume combo unless they tell you otherwise.
- It doesn't take long for Najeela to combo off.
- Infinite combats
 - Derevi, Empyrial Tactician; Druids' Repository; Nature's Will; Bear Umbra; Sword of Feast & Famine; Old Gnawbone;
- Keep Najeela from attacking to keep the board manageable, it snowballs out of control fast

JSIKA, GOD OF THE TREE // THE PRISMATIC BRIDGE

- Expect the worse to come off of the Bridge
- If possible, don't allow it to trigger even once
- Similar "could be ANYTHING" fear to something like Satoru

JODAH, ARCHMAGE ETERNAL

- If they cast Jodah, they definitely have something crazy.
- Assume Omniscience or One with the Multiverse, especially if they've tutored.
- It becomes an uphill battle as soon as they can activate Jodah. Hold removal for him, hopefully when they're tapped out.

THE LOCUST GOD

- See also: Xyris, the Writhing Storm
- Plan for a wheel.
- Keep an eye out for Purphoros, Impact Tremors or repeatable wheels. Those raise the threat level exponentially.

TERGRID, GOD OF FRIGHT

- Play fetches early.
- Hold removal for Tergrid. There's usually a window the turn they cast her. She's expensive and the coolest things to do with her aren't usually cheap.
- The deck is clunky, but will do something nasty if you don't have interaction for her.
 - Pox, Smallpox, Plaguecrafter
- She's weak to spellslinger decks so don't expect the slinger deck to handle her.

PREFERABLY NOW

If this Commander is on the board, it may already be too late. Remove it as soon as you have priority.

KORVOLD, FAE-CURSED KING

- Remove Korvold in response to the ETB trigger if possible
- If his controller has treasures or a free sac outlet, you may be in trouble already
- Treasures are the worst. Consider playing around dockside as much as possible
- Beware sac outlets, protection, and haste.

JODAH, THE UNIFIER

- Legendary is no longer a restriction, consider this deck 5C good stuff
- The Legendary Cascade doesn't usually come into play the turn it comes down, but it will be scary when they untap.
- The anthem effect is an immediate problem, however. Don't let them catch you without blockers on turn 4. Those cheap Legendary creatures will punch hard

K'RRIK, SON OF YAWGMOTH

- K'rrik plays fast, be ready for him.
- Chip damage against a K'rrik deck matters. Get in for damage when you can.
- He's typically a storm deck so keep an eye out for card advantage: Necropotence, Bolas's Citadel
- Interrupt life gain wherever possible, but prioritize card advantage

VEYRAN, VOICE OF DUALITY

- Triggered abilities of permanents are some of the scariest things in a Spellslinger deck
 - Guttersnipe; Archmage Emeritus; Storm-Kiln Artist; Krark, the Thumbless
- If this deck gets going, it's very difficult to stop.
- Many of the spells in this deck are instants so it is a problem as soon as it hits the battlefield.
- Don't forget Veyran has super-Prowess and can be a real threat in combat too.

THE GITROG MONSTER

- Lands decks can be difficult to interact with, especially combo decks
- Gitrog struggles against graveyard hate, especially if it's instant speed.
- Dredge, sac, and discard loops are Gitrog at his scariest. Remove discard outlets whenever possible.
 - Life from the Loam; Noose Constrictor; Oblivion Crown; Putrid Imp; Sylvan Safekeeper
- You can respond to draw triggers.

REMOVE SUPPORT

You're not going to be able to meaningfully interrupt these Commanders' plans. You will have to be prepared with other removal to beat them. Take the aggro route. Strip their hand. Remove the pieces that make the Commander powerful. Know that you have to apply steady pressure to these decks to avoid getting steamrolled.

YURIKO, THE TIGER'S SHADOW

- Removing Yuriko will not solve your ninja problem because of Commander Ninjutsu
- Pick off the other small creatures to reduce triggers.
 - Changeling Outcast; Mothdust Changeling; Triton Shorestalker
- Watch for top of library manipulation
 - Scroll Rack, Faerie Seer
- Race Yuriko damage and hope you get lucky.

URZA, LORD HIGH ARTIFICER

- See also: Kinnan, Bonder Prodigy
- Once Urza hits the board, a lot of damage is already done.
- They can float all the mana they need, can activate in response or hold the floated mana to recast Urza, they even make a construct on ETB.
- Reducing the number of artifacts is always helpful but pay special attention to engine cards:
 - Artifacts that untap or things that untap artifacts
 - Isochron Scepter, Dramatic Reversal
 - Triggers that draw cards or make more artifacts
 - Things that bounce artifacts to hand
 - Generally activated abilities that don't require a tap
 - Winter Orb

3) TO THE LISTENERS

Which Commanders are you the most scared of? Why are they so scary? How do you try to balance the scales against them?

****CARD KINGDOM #2** **ULTRA PRO #2****

4) THE END STEP

Something cool outside the world of Magic

5) CLEAN-UP STEP

Big thanks to our amazing team here at The Command Zone! **Craig Blanchette, Damen Lenz; Arthur Meadowcroft; Ladee Danger; Manson Leung; Josh Murphy; Jake Boss; Jordan Pridgen; Sam Waldow; Gaurav Gulati; Jamie Block; Mitch Trafford; Evan Limberger; Gabriel Pozos; Megan Yip; Eric Lem; and Josh Lee Kwai.**