

# Ashes Normal Coaching

Ashes Normal Coaching, Part 1 by [creevedog](#) and [mbauers](#)

Ashes Normal Coaching has been going on for a while now behind-the-scenes, and Charlotte has been an amazing student. [\[citation needed\]](#) I've learned a lot about this coaching process and how to make it more easily observable in the future when we add more students. We would like to talk a bit about the deckbuilding process and some of the conversations that we've had. We will demonstrate it with a new deck step-by-step, and hopefully show some insight into how competitive decks can be created!

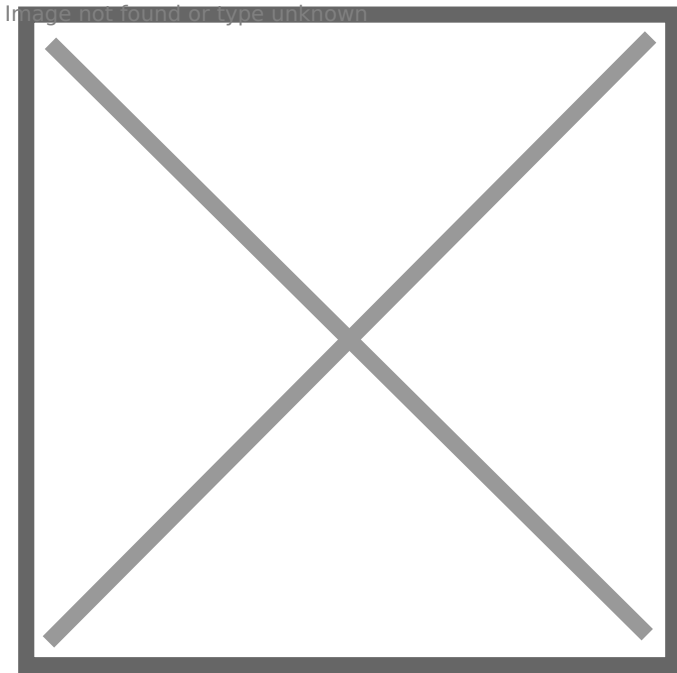
The process (some steps don't necessarily apply for each deck):

## Steps:

1. Choose PB/archetype dice type (example, Echo = sympathy or divine) - if dice agnostic, pick a dice type from the non-unique cards you most want to include.
2. Pick 10-15 cards in that dice type, plus PB special.
3. Identify other dice types and cut some cards if too many dice types (example, we cut Battle Seer since it was the only card pulling in Illusion).
4. Round out the remaining 30 cards.
5. Look for Adds - cards to swap now or just note for later.
6. Create sample FFs.
7. Take most likely FF and remove those cards.
8. Total the dice counts of the remaining 25 cards - count parallel costs as one or the other (can be split; 3x SP can be 1 sympathy, 2 charm)
9. Reduce totals to ratios and use ratios to determine dice counts.
10. Adjust ratio to include summon cost for any books in FF (example, LB in FF bumped divine from 1.5 to 2.5) ignoring book taxes.
11. Check all FFs against the dice spread and adjust if needed.
12. Take the play cost (or summon cost + book tax of the books you are drawing into) of the 25 non FFs and divide by 25 (to get cost per card).
13. Multiply cost per card by 5, then add any FF summon costs. This tells you approximately how many dice you will need to play your cards each round. You want the number close to 10. (Exceptions: Coal - number can be high because you can play cards for free; 4-book decks - per-card number needs to be lower because of the dice spent on the spellboard each round). Small differences can accommodate dice powers. If you go over, look for cards with a discard cost (Crescendo, Backtrack).
14. Spice
15. Deck name

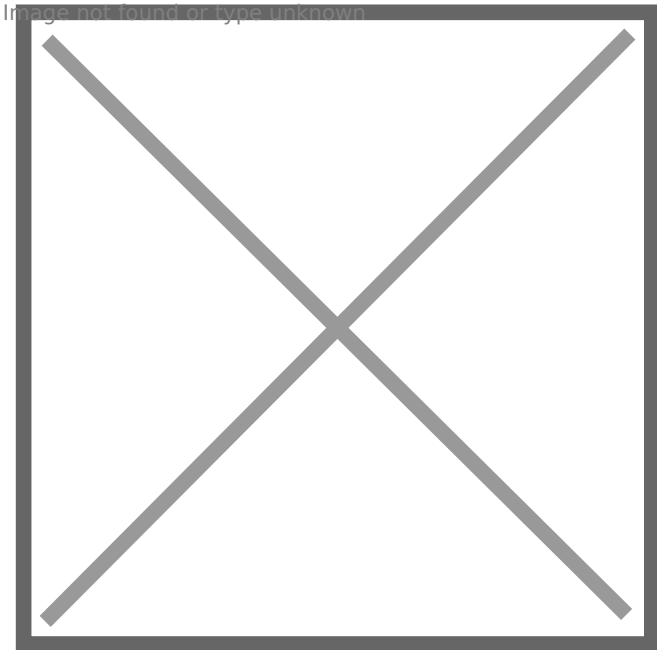
We used this process to collaboratively create Charlotte's Winter Open list. Here is a sample prompt for us to build another deck: Aradel with Gilder and Water Blast for Monks and Snappers, and our own Monk for value, but let's stick with just those 3 dice types, Nature, Charm, and Sympathy.

1. Done above
2. Screenshot:



3. When I look at this list, I would lean towards a 4 book start with an essence druid to get a second cobra or salamander. With the 4 books, water blast, and druid, it costs 2 nature, 3 charm, 3 sympathy, and one basic. This likely puts us at 4 Sym 4 Charm 2 Nature, or 4/3/3. The latter makes things like molten gold or extra pings more viable, the former allows a flexible start with the druid of either a second monk or cobra in round 1. I value flexibility, so I lean towards that.
4. Keeping in mind my above thoughts, I like all of the above cards. I would add something like 2 Sympathy Pains (reach, dual cost), an anchornaut or 2 (basic cost, works well with WB when we need our nature elsewhere and can't get the gilder), amplify x2 (lots of good targets), EV x2 (more pings), and probably 2 more raptor herders. Maybe another crescendo, then CUTR X2, then 2 other cards that may or may not be replaced in the spice step depending on our dice spread. Strange Copy and Return to Soil? Redirect? I made all of your suggested adds. I do like Redirect and I don't play it enough, so I added that. I'm not the biggest fan of Strange Copy (I can never find an opportunity to play it) so I'm nixing that one and I think Return to Soil might be good, but looking over C/N/S cards, I think Generosity might be a better addition? The untap is flexible and healing is never a bad idea in Aradel. I'm keeping Return to Soil on the list of possible adds, along with Ice Trap and Call to Action, two other cards I wanted to add but don't currently have a slot

for. (I wasn't sold on the String Mage to begin with - I just added her for token manipulation - so that's a spot that might free up at some point?) This is the list as of now:



5. Included above in number 4
6. 4 books plus Druid is pretty much going to be our FF. We can get a second cobra or salamander with it. Another potential FF would be something like Monk, Tamer, Huntmaster, Anchornaut, String Mage, both of these work with our current dice spread.
7. 4 Books plus Druid removed from card pool for math analysis
8. (and steps 9-11) Totaling up our remaining costs (and ignoring basic dice), so Beast Tamer (2 charm), EV x2 (2 charm), Amplify x2 (2 charm), Generosity (1 charm), Seeds of Aggression (1 charm), Sympathy pain (1 charm-for now use other two as sympathy), GV (1 charm), Redirect (1 charm) = 11 Charm

Huntmaster (1 sympathy), String mage (2 sympathy), Raptor Herder x2 (2 sympathy, use one for nature), Crescendo x2 (2 sympathy), Sympathy Pain x2 (2 sympathy) = 9 Sympathy

Huntmaster (1 nature), Raptor Herder (1 nature), Molten Gold (2 nature), Nature's Wrath (1 nature) = 5 Nature

Reducing the ratios (this time dividing by 5) Gives us Charm 2.2, Sympathy 1.8, Nature 1

If we expect to pay all of our Sympathy Pains with Sympathy dice, we can easily change the ratios to 10/10/5, or Charm 2, Sympathy 2, Nature 1. Now we add in our summons per round, which is one of each die, plus another nature for WB. This makes Charm 3, Sympathy 3, Nature 3. Already, it appears as though our 4/4/2 is off. We need to add a 4th charm or sympathy die for our druid opener. I think a Round 1 2nd salamander is more impactful than a round 1 cobra, so we lose the versatility and go to a 4 Sympathy, 3 Charm, 3 Nature dice spread to help with the rest of our deck. Hopefully our anchornaut basic dice sink and multiple parallel costed cards will help with our

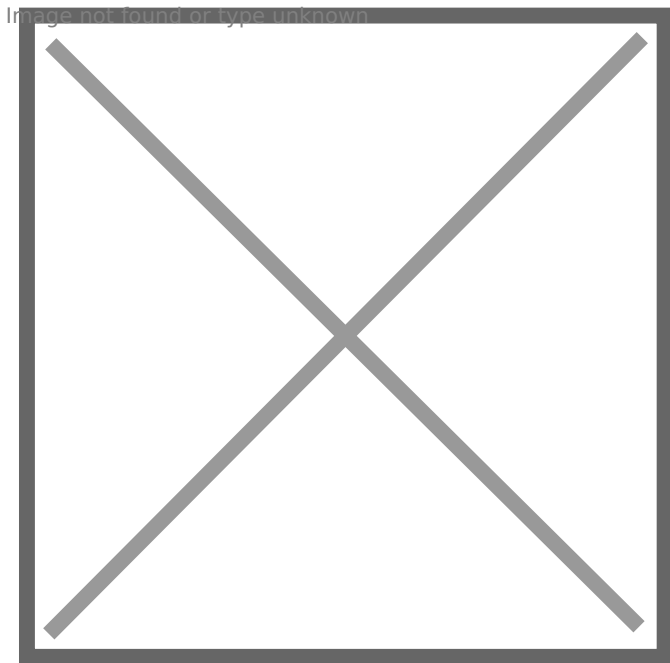
non-perfect ratios. Dice have been updated to 4/3/3. Side note, with our 3/3/3 ratios, someone could easily swap out one of our 4 sympathy dice for a time die, ditch the Magic Syphon, and replace it with a Snapper to make this a Valuetown deck. Side side note, you can do that, but then you become the thing that you hate, which would be lame. I mean the whole goal here was to take down Valuetown, not be Valuetown. Sometimes Matt really doesn't understand this game.

12) Adding up the 25 non-FF cards, we get 28 total dice. Divide that by 25 and you get 1.12 dice per card.

13)  $1.12 \times 5 = 5.6$  dice per 5 cards drawn. So take that, add 1 for Gilder, 1 for Cobra, 1 for Monk, 1 for Waterblast and we are at approximately 9.6 dice per round spent after round 1 using just our summons, PB ability, and drawn cards. Maybe every other round we have to spend a dice power. If we ever draw a hand with too costly of cards, we can hopefully mitigate that with crescendo.

14) Spice—we have some spicy 1xs with Generosity and Redirect. I don't really like the 1x Seeds of Aggression. We don't have any very strong units to make good usage of it, and our 8 Battlefield is unlikely to be full. I think instead a Return to Soil or Rile the Meek in its place might be better to catch people off-guard. I don't love Return to Soil so I added 1X Rile the Meek.

15) Deck Name Valuetown Liquidation Sale



I think this is a solid Version 1 of a deck. It has unit guard and good swinging potential and decent removal vs swarm decks and midrange decks. It has some reach, some mill, some healing—a skilled pilot can pivot win cons in this.

However, it doesn't have great hard removal against a big threat, so maybe needs a guilt link? Or maybe it can just go wide around such a deck and redirect when needed (plus Voltron decks aren't very prevalent). Now to test it to see if any tweaks are needed! I'm on it. Hype.

Version 1 test results:

I played two test matches, one against a Harold and one against a Tristan.

The Harold match went poorly. I FF'd the four books and Essence Druid (Sally X2). He had a Sonic/Flute Mage combo that just wore me out. I did make short work of two Realm Walkers (one with Water Blast/Gilder ping and one with Molten Gold) but otherwise, I did not deal with his threats very well. I mostly stayed even or ahead on board, but never did any appreciable damage to Tristan and made bad attacks. He was also running Fate Reflection which kind of wrecks much of what this deck wants to do. We had a chess clock and I ran out of time with 2 damage on Harold and 13 on Aradel. Not great. I was pretty down on the deck after that.

The Tristan match went better - we were both running a lot of weenie units and my built in ping kept his battlefield well under control. I dropped Syphon from my FF for a Raptor Herder - I think the extra bodies helped considerably. I kept a fairly stout battlefield throughout. Had a couple of sweet plays with Rile the Meek and Amplify/Anchonaut, and won in R4 with a Water Blast/Crescendo swing for 5 damage, followed up by a Molten Gold.

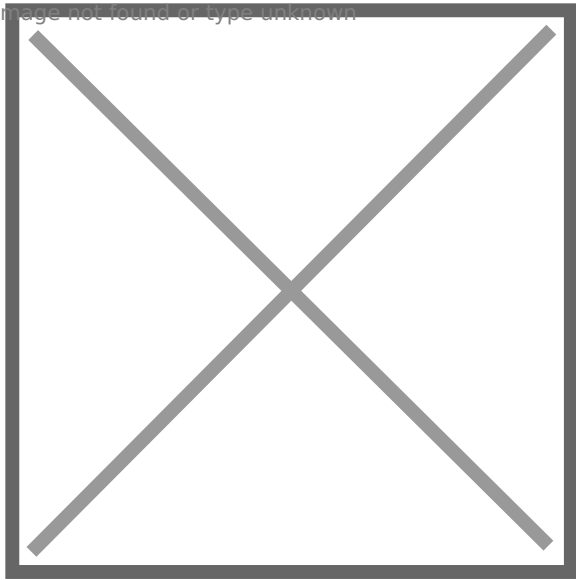
The dice spread worked pretty well in both matches. I had one round in the Harold match where I drew Amplify, EV, Redirect, and Sympathy Pain in the same hand - with only 3 charm and a Cobra book, that was a little tight. I think I used sympathy for the SP and just never played Redirect. In the Tristan match, I drew Molten Gold R2 and didn't have enough Nature dice to play it (it might be better to say I prioritized other things) until R4. That was less a problem though as I didn't really want to play it until I closed with it, it was just taking up a hand slot.

I think you're right that the deck needs a better way to deal with big beefers and could use a Guilt Link. Maybe swap the Magic Syphon? (I worry about my ability to time a Guilt Link though - I can never seem to isolate a great target. Other suggestions?) I also noticed that Gilder is dropping status tokens onto my units that I can't use (minus Huntmaster), so maybe I drop a Crescendo for a Wave Crash? Spice!

And finally, neither the Harold nor the Tristan decks were Valuetown decks. I have not, thus far, put Valuetown out of business. Sad face emoji.

Version 2 (-Magic Syphon, - 1XCrescendo, +Guilt Link, +Wave Crash)

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Version 2 test results (with screen shots even!):

Played a mirror, FF'd Guilt Link, 3 Books, Essence Druid (Sally X2). Opponent's FF was Sally Snapper, Gilder, Hunt Master, Mirror Spirit. (Smells like Valuetown!!)

Crazy fun match! I lost, but it was so close! I stayed ahead on board all game but never did a lot of PB damage. I did manage to Guilt Link his Hunt Master R1 because he misplayed, but got no more use out of GL after that.

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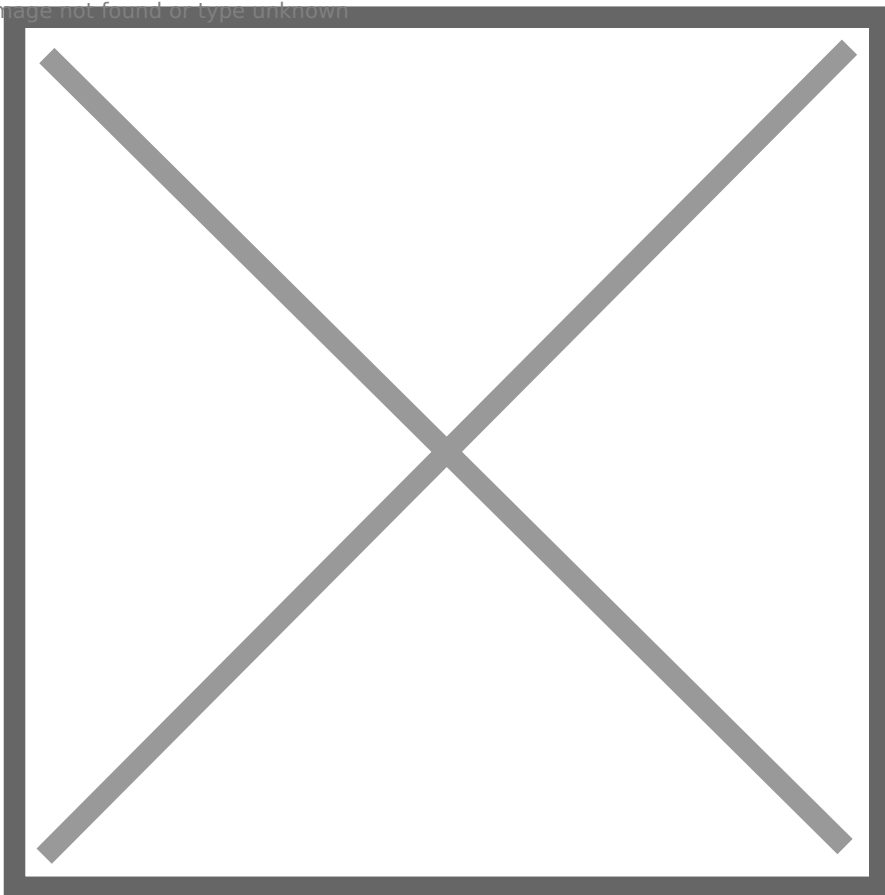
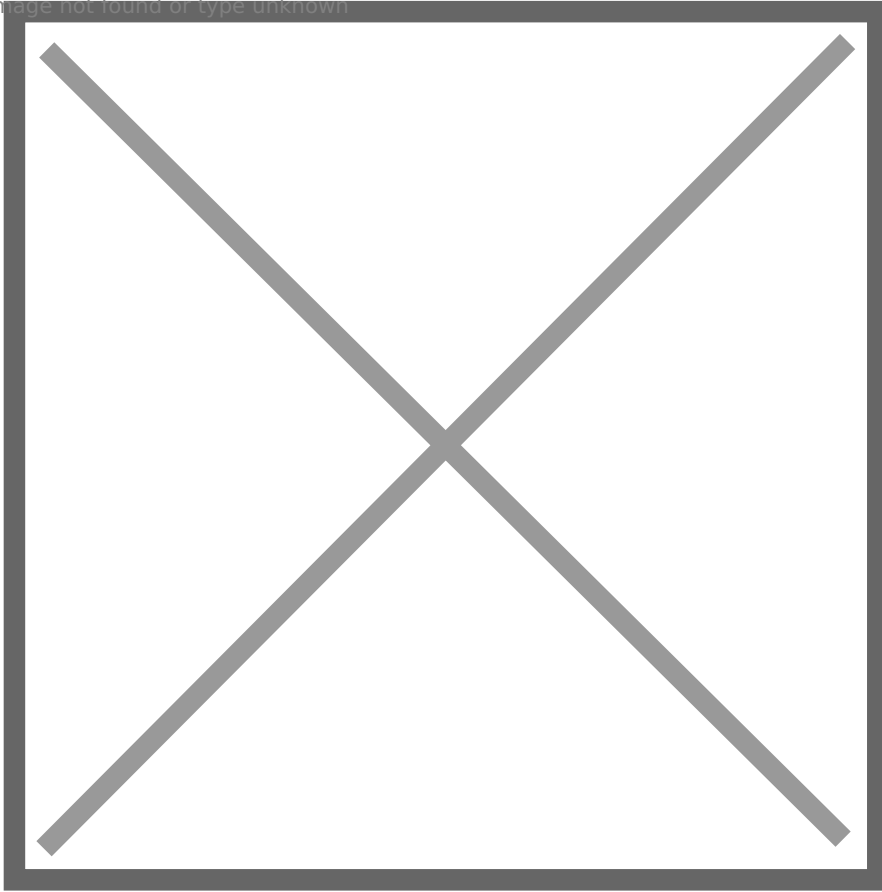
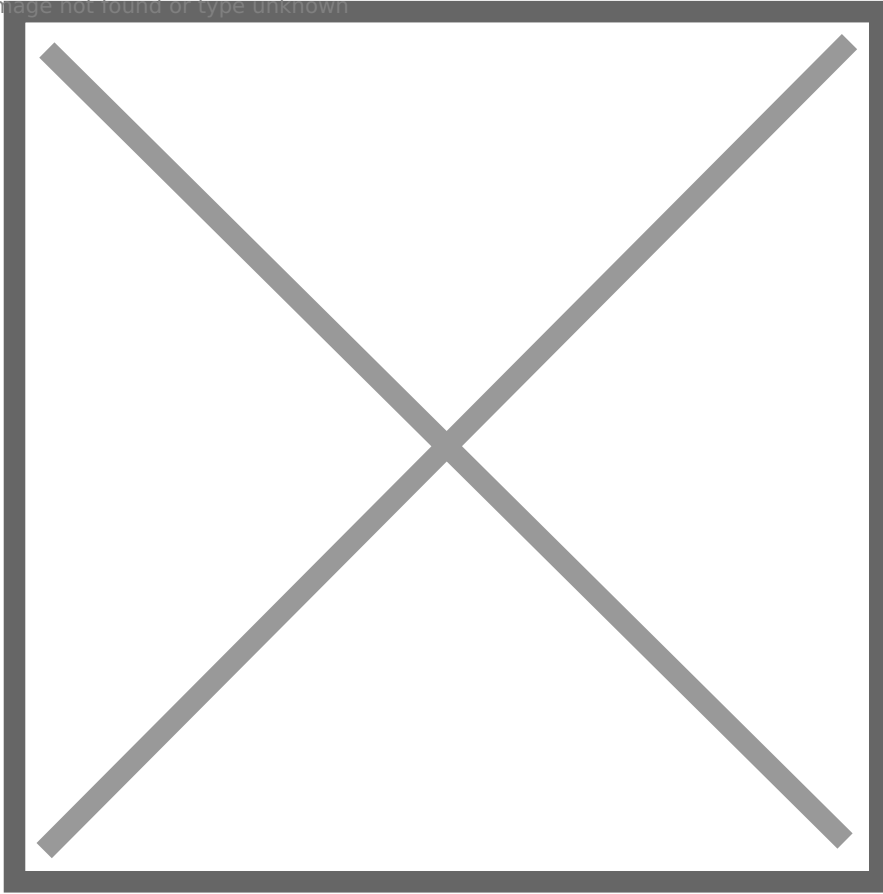


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R4 was epic. At the end of R3, he had me within 2, I needed to do 8. I was playing around a Sympathy Pain (that he later said he didn't have) so I just pinged his board away, hoping he wouldn't roll any power sides top of R4. But he rolled 2 power sympathy and a power charm. (He actually kept the power charm from the previous turn. I think I was so jacked up that I didn't realize he already had the power side he needed.) I even said GG and all that.

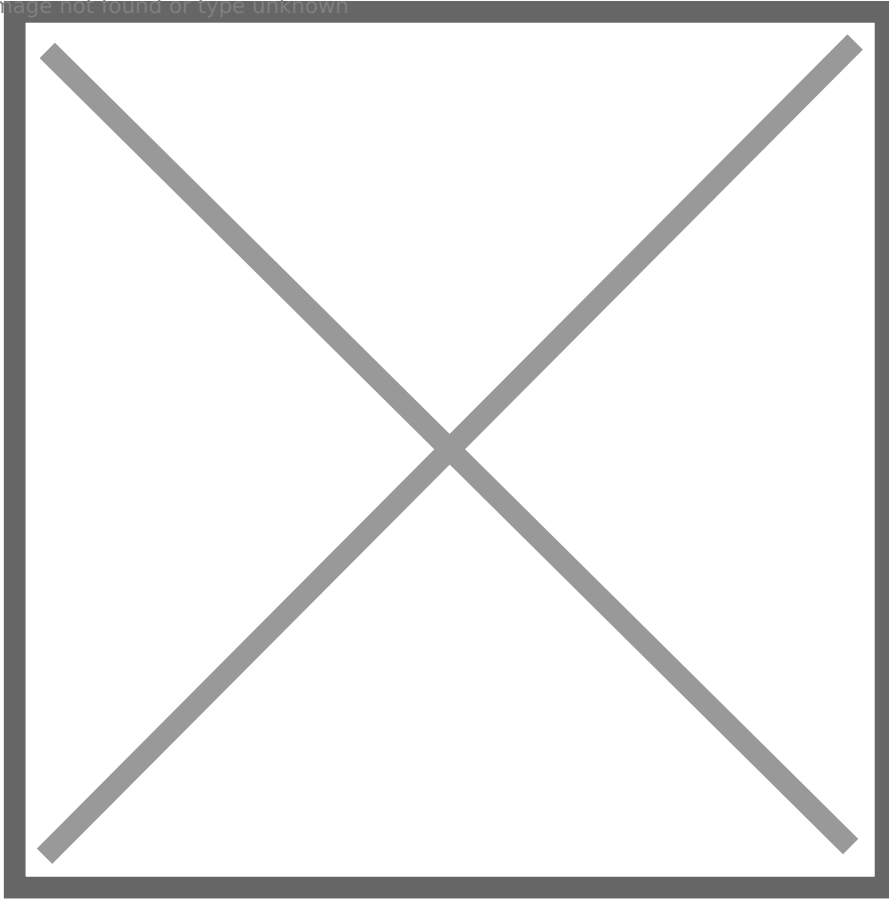
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But I drew a Generosity so now I'm out of SP range. I kept building up my board and trying to ping away his guys so I could Amplify a Cobra or a gilder. I ended up Sympathy drawing a Raptor Herder, which was perfect. He was swinging for 4, but I had blockers, then I planned to play RH and swing with Amplify, but he played Stand still on my Cobra and I lost.



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Even so, it was so fun and so close. I really like this deck. (After being so down on it after my first test match. What do I know?)

I only fired the Guilt Link once, but I took out a Hunt Master, so it did work. It might not be the best answer to big threats, but I think I'm keeping it for now. And the Wave Crash took out a Gilder. It's also a keeper.

I have my Phoenix League match on Wednesday. I'm planning to play Version 2. Fingers crossed!

Phoenix League match results:

Opponent brought Jessa (gross!) with C/N/D/S. I FF'd 3 books, Essence Druid (Sallyx2), and Raptor Herder over Guilt Link. I think I benefit from more bodies on the board in this match-up (and Jessa always benefits from things dying.)

He FF'd Sally, Light Bringer, Grave Knight, Huntmaster, and Final Cry. I Water Blasted/Gilder pinged the HM and was able to kill GK with Sally and ED. After that I pinged away his board and did 5 to Jessa, but not before taking 7.

I went first top of R2. I had a Gilder, ED, 2 Sally Spirits, Cobra, Raptor Herder and Hatchling still on board. And I drew a Nature's Wrath and a Redirect. He had a single Sally Spirit. So I swung for 6 unblocked. I redirected a Screams (I could have Redirected a Final Cry but I just forgot because I am me), put out a few other units, swung and pinged some more. Then NW to reset the board.

He did a lot of burn, but by the end of R2 I was able to put out a Cobra, RH, Hatchling, Sally and EV to swing 6 for lethal. I think I was down to 3 health remaining, so I just barely stayed ahead of the burn.

Final verdict:

This deck is hype. I really enjoy playing it. It puts out a lot of bodies and does a lot of ping damage. I only faced one Valuetown deck in four matches, but I think it does what it was designed to do in that match-up, and is solid in other match-ups as well. Two thumbs way up.

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Revision #3

Created 16 February 2023 23:23:45 by creevedog

Updated 21 June 2023 20:28:18 by creevedog