

# Preconstructed Matchups

Playing the preconstructed decks is a great way to get into Ashes Reborn! However, because the game is balanced mainly around constructed play, some of the preconstructed decks do not fare as well. Here is a list of recommended precon matchups.

Before you take any of these matchups for a spin, though, you should always remember to check [Ashes.live](#) or the [FAQ](#) for updated First Five suggestions! The suggestions in the rulebook are sometimes not the best, and of course expansions do not have recommended First Five suggestions included. (Choosing your own First Five is of course recommended once you have a little experience with a given deck, but the FAQ suggestions will get you into the game faster.)

## Master Set

Unfortunately, two of the decks within the Master Set are the worst offenders for poorly constructed preconstructed decks: Noah Redmoon's deck has several dead cards (particularly [Bound Soul](#) and [Sleight of Hand](#)), cards that just make very little sense in that particular deck ( [Resummon](#) and [Small Sacrifice](#)), and one card that is situational enough it's difficult to get good value out of it ([Shadow Strike](#)); and Jessa Na Ni's deck has relatively few cards that can reliably put damage on her opponent along with dead cards of its own (particularly [Blood Transfer](#) and Cut the Strings--widely considered the worst cards in the game-- but [Blood Shaman](#), [Living Doll](#), and [Summon Blood Puppet](#) are all situational to the point of occasional uselessness). Saria's deck is also occasionally problematic, in that it doesn't have a very solid gameplan (it was intended to showcase mill cards, but it doesn't lean into mill heavily enough so a lot comes down to how well you can leverage [Seaside Raven](#)).

The remaining three decks all provide good matchups:

- **Maeoni vs. Aradel:** this is my favorite starting matchup. Maeoni relies on a single large chunk of unblockable damage, while Aradel relies on lots of small units. The two decks also pack counters to one another (e.g. [Steady Gaze](#) vs. [Refresh](#)). The Aradel player will likely have a slightly harder time, thanks to Maeoni having access to two of the best conjurations in the game (Gilder and Silver Snake).
- **Aradel vs. Coal:** this is my second favorite matchup. Coal has lots of tools to handle Aradel's weak units, and battles between the two are often brutal slugfests. There's only one important thing to know: the Coal player *must not summon Iron Rhino round 1!* Although Iron Rhino looks awesome (such a big unit!) it's a bit of a trap because it costs so many dice. It can be situationally good, but is virtually never worth it in the first round.

- **Coal vs. Maeoni:** similar to the matchup against Aradel, except Coal has [Hammer Knight](#)

I additionally enjoy **Maeoni vs. Jessa**. Yes, Jessa is not a great precon, but if you have two players who are used to the type of complexity found in these sorts of card battlers, this can be a really engaging matchup because the two players are fighting along such different axes.

**Saria vs. Maeoni/Aradel/Coal** will provide a potentially decent game, as well, but this isn't something I would recommend for your first game; both players will want to know how the first three decks tick before you add Saria into the mix.

If you have one player who is a lot better at Ashes than the other, given them Noah Redmoon as a handicap (and if you want to *really* handicap them, don't allow them to choose their First Five; make them use the one in the rulebook). Otherwise, I don't really recommend playing the Noah precon under normal circumstances.

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