

## CZ0546: HOW TO PLAY WHITE (WITH RACHEL WEEKS)

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- 1) UPKEEP STEP
  - 2) MAIN TOPIC
  - 3) TO THE LISTENERS
  - 4) END STEP
  - 5) CLEAN-UP PHASE
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**\*\*\*CLAP AND SLATE AND DANCE\*\*\***

- 1) INTRO JIMMY & RACHEL

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

*ATTENTION: WHITE MAGES. Today, we're breaking down Magic's fairest color, the strengths, the weaknesses, the strategies, and the staples. And who better to do that than Rachel Weeks? BUT FIRST:*

**\*\*CARD KINGDOM\*\* \*\*ULTRAPRO #1\*\* \*\*PATREON: DEXTER ANCHETA\*\***

- 2) MAIN TOPIC: **HOW TO PLAY WHITE**

*The first thing you have to understand when building your own Commander deck is the color pie. Commander players are limited by our deck's color identities, so we should know what each color is good and bad at, and how they work best when they're the primary focus of a deck, or as an additional way to power it up and enhance. That way we're not relying on a color to do something it simply isn't designed to do. And we know what weaknesses to shore up when we're playing mono- or two-colored decks.*

*Today we're talking about WHITE.*

### **ENEMY COLORS**

If you want to know how to play white well, you first need to understand how white is being designed. White's color identity is a little murkier than red's which we've already covered. It's not as clear as emotion and fire, because it's mired in complicated concepts like religion, civilization and altruism. I find it easiest to think about white as it relates to its enemies.

White's enemies are black and red:

#### **WHITE VS. BLACK**

Where **black** is greedy and ambitious, sacrificing life and creatures for power. White is collaborative and selfless, gaining life, creating creatures, making all your creatures stronger. The more you have, the more powerful you are. White rewards you for growing your board, building with synergy. Black is broken. White is fair.

#### **WHITE VS. RED**

Where **red** is impulsive and emotional, crashing headlong into battle and burning cards for damage, white is sensible and coordinated. It works efficiently but not hastily. It takes its time and strikes when the moment is right. Red is hasty. White is patient.

Fair, patient, balanced, peaceful... White sounds boring. But I love white because it's stripped back. It isn't broken, it's efficient. White is an endurance runner. It holds mana up for board protection and removal. It flashes in creatures at the end of turn. It chips in damage. It's not fast, but it is inevitable. Winning with white feels like David taking down a goliath with a slingshot.

### **WHAT IS WHITE GOOD AT?**

*At this point, every color in Magic has SOME way of doing all of the important things: ramp, card draw, removal, board wipes, etc. But each color has its restrictions. Some things it's great at. Others it's just ok. When building a primarily white deck or just splashing white, it's good to know the answers to: What can white effectively add to your strategy? When should you turn to white cards? How can you maximize white's efficiency?*

### **REMOVAL**

*Efficient Removal* > Swords to Plowshares; Path to Exile; Cathar Commando; Darksteel Mutation;

*Flexible Removal* > Generous Gift; Excise the Imperfect; Soul Partition; Grasp of Fate;

*Repeatable Removal* > Skyclave Apparition; Angel of the Ruins; Solitude; Loran of the Third Path; Aerial Extortionist;

### **BOARD WIPES**

*Creatures* > Wrath of God; Angel of the Dire Hour; Vanquish the Horde

*Conditional* > Dusk / Dawn; Elspeth, Sun's Champion; Hour of Reckoning; Fell the Mighty; Battle of Bywater

*Everything* > Austere Command; Farewell (*is this the best board wipe ever?*); Akroma's Vengeance

*Artifacts / Enchantments* > Cleansing Meditation; Paraselene; Dismantling Wave

*Lands* > Armageddon; Cataclysm; Catastrophe

*Yeah That Too* > Hallowed Burial; Elesh Norn, Grand Cenobite; Magus of the Tabernacle

### **RECURSION**

*Small Permanents* > Sevinne's Reclamation; Sun Titan; Serra Paragon; Guardian Scalelord;

*Conditional Permanents* > Open the Vaults; Brought Back; Faith's Reward, Sudden Salvation; Cosmic Intervention; Second Sunrise;

*Reanimation* > Emeria Shepherd; Celestine, the Living Saint; Emeria, the Sky Ruin; Karmic Guide; Marshal's Anthem;

### **PROTECTION**

*Self Protection* > Teferi's Protection; Ghostly Prison; Serra's Emissary;

*Board Protection* > Flawless Maneuver; Mother of Runes; Clever Concealment; Selfless Spirit; Boromir, Warden of the Tower

*Turn Protection* > Grand Abolisher; Silence; Dragonlord Dromoka (GW);

### TOKENS

*Tokens* > Felidar Retreat; Adeline, Resplendent Cathar; Elspeth, Sun's Champion; Call the Coppercoats  
*Double Tokens* > Mondrak, Glory Dominus; Anointed Procession;

### KEYWORDS

*Beaters* > Akroma, Angel of Wrath; Angel of Invention; Steel Seraph;  
*Anthems* > Akroma's Will; Odric, Lunarch Marshal; True Conviction;

### TUTORING

*Artifact/Enchantments* > Enlightened Tutor; Open the Armory; Idyllic Tutor; Academy Rector;  
*Equipment* > Stoneforge Mystic; Steelshaper's Gift  
*Planeswalkers* > Arena Rector;  
*Legends* > Search for Glory;  
*Lands* > Land Tax; Archaoemancer's Map; Weathered Wayfarer;  
*Little Creatures* > Ranger-Captain of Eos; Recruiter of the Guard

### STALLING

*Taxing* > Aura of Silence; Smothering Tithe; Esper Sentinel; Ghostly Prison  
*ETB Tapped* > Archon of Emeria; Blind Obedience; Thalia, Heretic Cathar;

### BLINKING

*Blink* > Ephemerate; Teleportation Circle; Eerie Interlude; Felidar Guardian;  
*Double ETBs* > Elesh Norn, Mother of Machines; Gandalf the White;

### EQUIPMENT

Stoneforge Mystic; Sram, Senior Edificer; Sigarda's Aid; Puresteel Paladin; Armored Skyhunter

### WHITE'S CREATURE TYPES

*Every color has creature types it effectively supports. White has many popular creature types, but none moreso than...*

- Angels and Humans
- *But also...*
  - Archons; Catfolk; Loxodon; Kithkin; Giants; Unicorns; Spirits; Birds;
  - Clerics; Knights; Monks; Soldiers;
- *Generic Typal Support* > Rally the Ranks; And They Shall Know No Fear
  - Not much outside of specific type support

\*\*\*MIDROLL POINT\*\*\*

## WHAT DOES WHITE STRUGGLE WITH?

*This is important to know when you're building mono-white or mostly white. It helps you anticipate some of your deck's problems before they happen in game. What are the pitfalls of the color? What cards should you add to patch some of those holes?*

## EXPLOSIVENESS

*Although it is improving, white is not fast. Its ramp relies on its opponents getting ahead or building a lot of synergy into its mana base. White ramp is consistently hitting your land drops.*

- *Catch Up Ramp* > Loyal Warhound; Knight of the White Orchid; Deep Gnome Terramancer; Archaeomancer's Map
  - *Bounce Lands* > Guildless Commons; Karoo;
- *Recursive Ramp* > Sun Titan; Sevinne's Reclamation; The Restoration of Eiganjo;
  - Ash Barrens; Fetchlands;
  - Flagstones of Trokair (especially with green)
- *Creature required ramp* > Sword of Hearth and Home; Sword of the Animist; Legion's Landing
- This is why Smothering Tithe is SO powerful. It's the most explosive ramp white has.

## CARD ADVANTAGE/SELECTION

*White can generate card advantage but it requires tight deckbuilding and extra slots dedicated to bolstering your hand. And using the cards you do have very efficiently. You often only get one trigger per turn. Little scry, surveil. No selection.*

- *If you do, I draw* > Mangara the Diplomat; Esper Sentinel; Archivist of Oghma; Aerial Extortionist; Fey Steed; Smuggler's Share;
- *If creature, I draw* > Welcoming Vampire; Rumor Gatherer; Tocasias's Welcome;
- *We draw* > Cut a Deal; Your Temple is Under Attack;
  - I don't tend to run a lot of this
- *Equipment draw* > Skullclamp; Mask of Memory;

## SELF MILL

*White can use its graveyard to great effect, but it struggles to build a graveyard. Combine with literally any other color to get stuff in the graveyard effectively. OR. Use sac outlets or permanents that sacrifice themselves (Cathar Commando, Fetchlands) to make sure you always have something to bring back from the grave.*

- Mask of Memory; Palantir of Orthanc;

## STACK INTERACTION

*White can remove anything, but struggles against lethal spells (Craterhoofs, Torments of Hailfire, etc.)*

- Reprieve; Lapse of Certainty; Teferi's Protection; Clever Concealment; Brave the Elements; Angel's Grace

## REACH

*White is very good at not dying. It can gain life, bring cards back from the graveyard, protect itself, but it still struggles to end the game because it largely requires a board to win and doesn't have access to haste. If white wins, it's because it refuses to lose.*

- Akroma's Will; Akroma, Vision of Ixidor; True Conviction; Cathar's Crusade; Odric Lunarch Marshal
- Board Wipe + Flawless Maneuver
- Teferi's Protection > *Buys you one more turn.*

### **POWERFUL PIE BREAKS**

Reprieve; Lapse of Certainty; Debt of Loyalty; Evangelize; Preacher; Suture Priest; Fanatical Devotion;

### **PRIMARY COLOR VS. SUPPORT**

*White has things it's good at and others that it isn't. Remember not to fall back on white staples when another color could handle things better.*

- *White as a Mono Color* > If white is your Mono Color, then you will need to recognize its inherent weaknesses (slow to ramp, permanent based) and build to accommodate them. Relying on catch-up ramp? Run bouncelands. Only triggers once per turn? Run more card draw.
  - I think white is a better mono-color than red or even blue.
- *White as a Support Color* > If White is the second color, then shore up white's weaknesses with the other colors' strengths. Use red to add explosiveness and haste. Use blue for card advantage. White probably isn't your win con unless you're playing Azorius. Lean on green, black or red for dealing damage.
- *White as a Tertiary Color* > If White is your third or fourth/fifth color, then you really want to focus on just using the cards that synergize the most or give you the most bang for your buck.
  - *Removal* > Swords to Plowshares; Path to Exile;
  - *Protection* > Ghostly Prison; Teferi's Protection;
  - *Tokens* > Secure the Wastes; Call the Coppercoats

### **WINNING WITH WHITE**

*If you want to play white and not just default to the artifact combos of the world, then you're best off relying on white's strengths and building with synergy.*

- *Win Conditions* > Flying; Outlasting; Going Wide; Anthem Effects; Mass Reanimation; Steady Pressure
- White is slow and can stumble early. Stay quiet and generate value. Hit every land drop. Find a value equipment, equip it to something small (Remorseful Cleric or Selfless Spirit are great for this). Accrue value while your opponents aren't worried about you. Then take over the game by wiping the board and recovering faster than your opponents or protecting your board.
- Chip damage is essential to winning with white. Evasion is king, but don't underestimate Vigilance and Lifelink for buying yourself free attacks in the early to mid game.
- Use permanent based removal that you can blink and recur.
- ALWAYS hold up protection. You can last another turn. You **cannot** afford to lose your board.

## **GOLD CARDS**

*We talked a lot about cards that are purely white today, but you'll find that being in more than one color means access to Gold cards / multi-colored cards. White always adds on some level of the spice we have discussed today. So keep an eye out next time you're looking to build a Commander deck - maybe some gold cards will push you in a direction to make you want to include more white. Here are some two-color cards that show how White can really add to another color and help push a deck in a certain direction:*

- *Orzhov*: Damn; Elenda, the Dusk Rose; Despark;
- *Selesnya*: Mirri, Weatherlight Duelist; Yasharn, Implacable Earth; Sterling Grove; Mirari's Wake
- *Azorius*: The Council of Four; Disorder in the Court; Midnight Pathlighter;
- *Boros*: Iroas, God of Victory; Neyali, Suns' Vanguard; Aurelia's Fury; Every Equipment Commander

## 3) **TO THE LISTENERS**

White mages! What's your favorite thing about playing white? Did we miss any of the color's pitfalls? What's your favorite tech to shore up those weaknesses and pilot your white decks to victory?

**\*\*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! **Damen Lenz; Eric Lem; Megan Yip; Gaurav Gulati; Jordan Pridgen; Jamie Block; Arthur Meadowcroft; Manson Leung; Josh Murphy; Jake Boss; Sam Waldow; Evan Limberger; Ladee Danger; Craig Blanchette; Mitch Trafford; Gabriel Pozos; and Josh Lee Kwai.**