

CZ464: CARDS YOU'RE PLAYING WRONG

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

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Anyone who has played a lot of Commander knows that there are just certain cards that players often get wrong. Certain effects where you feel like every time you see it somebody is like "that's not how that works". Or other stuff where, the player clearly knows what the card does, but you can't help but thinking "I wouldn't have used it like that." Today's episode is the CARDS YOU'RE PLAYING WRONG.

BUT FIRST:

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2) MAIN TOPIC: CARDS YOU'RE PLAYING WRONG

This list of cards we're gonna talk about can kind of be divided up into two categories:

- 1) "Wrong" in regards to the rules.
Meaning that players often don't understand how certain cards work.
- 2) "Wrong" in regards to in-game decisions & play patterns.
This second one is obviously more subjective. But there are certain cards that people just tend to play sub-optimally.

Example of wrong re: Rules:

- **MANA VAULT CAN ONLY UNTAP DURING UPKEEP** (Gaurav)
 - A lot of incorrect rules interpretations stem from the fact that there are other similar cards that work in a different way. Your brain just kind of wants group them all together and assume they all function the same (in this case Basalt Monolith/Grim Monolith).

Example of wrong re: Optimal Play:

- **SWORD OF'S SUB-OPTIMAL SEQUENCING** (Feast & Famine / Hearth & Home / Fire & Ice)
 - Unless you have literally nothing else you can do, you should generally not be playing these onto the battlefield until you can also equip and swing on the same turn.
 - *You're telegraphing a moment for your opponent's to blow you out, tempo-wise.*

MORAUG, FURY OF AKOUM

This card is worded in a really strange way and (similar to Mana Vault) it works differently than how many other extra combat cards do.

- You don't want a landfall trigger during your pre-combat main phase.
This will cause the extra combat to happen before regular combat. So you will not untap after the extra combat. So you want to go to regular attacks first, then in second main, hit landfall as many times you possible.
- You do not get a third main phase after the extra combats from Moraug.
 - *Compare wording to Aggravated Assault, Scourge of the Throne, Seize the Day.*
 - *Why did they word it so confusingly??*

HAZORET MISPLAY - PRO TOUR: HOUR OF DEVASTATION (2017)

JLK: Reminds me a little of the famous misplay by Yam Wing Chun where he went to combat before casting a spell and couldn't attack with Hazoret because he had too many cards in hand (semi finals of Pro Tour Hour of Devastation). It cost him the match against PVDDR, who went on to be champion.

SYLVAN LIBRARY

Not a rules thing. People generally know how this cards works. They just don't draw enough cards.

- Players tend to think of it in terms of 4 life per card. But it's not just about that. It's also faster access to the cards below that. It's 8 life to look at the next 6 cards.
 - *If you look and you like them, you should take them all.*
 - *If you look and you don't, you should take them all so you can get to cards you do like.*
- What about if you have a shuffle effect on board, like a fetchland?
- What about if you're at low life?
- Remember: There's no guarantee that the enchantment will still be there on your next turn.

NECROPOTENCE

Same as Sylvan Library. Stop being timid. The card is only broken if you draw 15-20+.

- If you don't draw a lot of cards upfront it's pretty awkward on the 2nd turn with it because you don't put the cards in your hand until the end step.
- Once again, there's nothing to say the enchantment is even still there on your next turn (though you generally can activate in response to removal).
- Don't forget to skip your draw step and exile the cards you discard!

"FORCE OF" CARDS FROM MODERN HORIZONS

This IS a rules thing. We're talking about Force of Negation, Force of Vigor, Force Virtue, etc:

- You can't cast them for "free" unless it's not your turn (gets forgotten a lot)
- Why do we think they added this clause instead of templating them just like similar cards in the past: Force of Will, Fury of the Horde, Foil?

ANGER & WONDER

The others are Brawn (Green - gives Trample), Valor (White - First Strike), Filth (Black - Swampwalk).

- It's easy to forget that (in addition to needing to be in the graveyard) these all require that you have a certain land type on the battlefield.

NOXIOUS REVIVAL

One of the more popular green cards. People often forget that you can target your opponent's stuff.

- Like, maybe if they have Anger in their graveyard?
- Also works if they go to reanimate something, or snapcaster/torrential gearhulk, etc

MIDROLL BREAK

WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE

Would be difficult to do this episode topic and not discuss this card. It reads as very confusing.

The first question to ask yourself is: Do I want to discard my hand and draw 7 new cards?

- If the answer is NO: Choose Zero (bids of zero are guaranteed not to wheel)
- If the answer is YES: Then you need to try to speculate on if each other player will want to discard & draw or not - and how badly. In general, the higher the bid, the more you want to wheel.
 - Often players will just tell you (note: For the most part, you do NOT want to indicate the outcome you desire, they can use it against you)
 - If there is clearly a player who likes their hand and does not want to wheel? Then you are usually safe bidding fairly low amounts (3-5).
 - If all players seem to want to wheel, then it can get interesting.
 - If you DO want to wheel, it is often advantageous to somehow subtly project that you don't want to, to encourage the other players to bid low
 - If you DON'T want to wheel - then the opposite can be true. Pretend that you do want to so then you force someone else to take as much damage as possible.

Remember: the biggest factor to weigh when figuring out who wants to wheel (and who doesn't) is the number of cards they currently have (and what they state and how they act. People are rarely even cognizant that they should be trying to hide their intentions. Magic is not viewed the same as Poker.

GRAND ABOLISHER

People play this out onto the board willy-nilly, like it's a new rule they want to inflict upon the game.

- Grand Abolisher is meant as a tool to protect an important (hopefully game-winning) turn.
 - You wanna play this and then go Mana Geyser, Sneak Attack, sneak out 50 things. etc.*
- If you play Grand Abolisher and don't immediately start doing stuff that your opponents would try to stop if they could, you're doing it wrong. You're just letting your opponent's plan for it.
- Game Knights episode #5 and see how Melissa DeTora uses Dragonlord Dromoka just this way.

MORE “DON’T PLAY IT UNTIL YOU CAN USE IT” CARDS

The Grand Abolisher philosophy holds true with a lot of other cards:

- Dragonmaster Outcast, Viscera Seer, Treasonous Ogre (Lightning Greaves, sometimes)

SOL RING / MANA CRYPT

Our STATS episode a number of years ago indicated that playing these on early turns might make you too scary to the rest of the table and actually cause you to lose win shares overall.

- Philosophically similar to Grand Abolisher, Dragonmaster Outcast, etc: Is it ever correct to hold Sol Ring or Mana Crypt in your hand and not play them turn one?

URZA’S SAGA

When it gets to Chapter 3, you can activate it before you sac it.

- You can either make a “karnstruct” or you can at least float the mana.

AFFINITY FOR ARTIFACTS + TREASURE

So, this is a neat little rules interaction. Also works with Emry.

- You can announce that you’re casting the spell, then it will check to see what costs must be paid, you pay those costs and the spell goes on the stack. You do not check a second time after costs are paid to see what the cost was.

VANDALBLAST

People basically refuse to cast it for regular cost. This mode should probably be used 15-20% of the time.

- One mana to destroy a single artifact is pretty efficient.
- Sometimes if you wait to blow up more stuff, they will have already gotten value out the things you destroy. Making it *less* devastating than it seems.
- Cyclonic Rift, Capsize, etc can be viewed in a similar light (especially earlier in the game if you have ways to get the cards back or recast them later (snappy, archaeomancer, etc))

BRAINSTORM

This is a classic one that most experienced players know, but for the new players out there:

- You want to cast Brainstorm in conjunction with a shuffle effect, if possible.
 - *Fetchlands, Tutors, etc. (maybe do it in response to chapter 3 on Urza’s Sage?) This just let’s you look at more cards and get rid of stuff that isn’t useful now (high drops in the early game, mana rocks in the late game, etc)*

CABAL STRONGHOLD

Doesn’t work with Urborg, unfortunately. It’s only counts basic swamps.

LOOTING

Cards like Bag of Holding, Jace, Vryn's Prodigy. There is an old rule of Magic: Always loot.

- Less experienced players tend to be hesitant about looting. If they have 5 cards in hand and like all of them, sometimes they'll just decline to do it. This is almost always incorrect.
- Do you have any recursion in your deck? Anything like Delve? Flashback? Madness?
- Unless you're down to one card and it's half of a combo piece, you should basically always loot.

Important to note: Rummaging (discarding before drawing) is not the same as looting and you have to be more careful with it.

3) TO THE LISTENERS:

What are some cards that you see players often playing "wrong"?

****CHANNELFIREBALL CALL-OUT #2** **ULTRA PRO #2****

4) CLEAN-UP STEP

Big thanks to our amazing team here at The Command Zone! **Damen Lenz, Shauna Gilles, Arthur Meadowcroft, Ashlen Rose, Ladee Danger, Manson Leung, Craig Blanchette, Josh Murphy, Jake Boss, Patrick Nan, Jordan Pridgen, Sam Waldow, Gaurav Gulati, Truc Thai, Jamie Block, Mitch Trafford, and Evan Limberger.**

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