

Final Fantasy Report: Learned Archetypes, Bombs, and Synergies

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Dataset Snapshot

This run uses 173,242 unique deck builds and 769,659 game rows. The unsupervised clustering stage produced 11 learned archetypes. The best-performing large shells are Izzet | Sahagin / Blazing Bomb, Boros Humans | Weapons Vendor / Paladin's Arms, Golgari Humans | Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter, which already tells us that the format is not a single monolithic color table: it separates into distinct deck families with their own signposts, core cards, and build-around incentives.

1 Discovered Archetypes

Archetype	Decks	Games	WR	Top signposts
Izzet Sahagin / Blazing Bomb	23,536	109,292	57.14%	Sahagin, Blazing Bomb, Shantotto, Tactician Magician, Call the Mountain Chocobo, The Emperor of Palamecia
Boros Humans Weapons Vendor / Paladin's Arms	15,088	67,889	56.92%	Weapons Vendor, Paladin's Arms, White Mage's Staff, Zidane, Tantalus Thief, Slash of Light
Golgari Humans Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter	21,300	96,603	56.53%	Shinra Reinforcements, Town Greeter, Cloud of Darkness, Fight On!, Exdeath, Void Warlock
Orzhov Humans Rufus Shinra / Judge Magister Gabranth	15,263	68,185	56.19%	Rufus Shinra, Judge Magister Gabranth, White Mage's Staff, White Auracite, Dwarven Castle Guard
Azorius Gaelicat / White Auracite	16,722	74,183	55.88%	Gaelicat, White Auracite, White Mage's Staff, Cid, Timeless Artificer, Paladin's Arms
Dimir Humans Locke Cole / Cornered by Black Mages	15,671	70,726	55.76%	Locke Cole, Cornered by Black Mages, Hecteyes, Ultimecia, Time Sorceress, Vayne's Treachery

Archetype	Decks	Games	WR	Top signposts
Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	11,140	48,611	55.64%	Rinoa Heartilly, Garnet, Princess of Alexandria, Summon: Choco/Mog, Summon: Fat Chocobo, White Auracite
Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	19,770	85,474	54.99%	Ignis Scientia, Omega, Heartless Evolution, Town Greeter, Travel the Overworld, Qiqirn Merchant
Rakdos Humans Mysidian Elder / Garland, Knight of Cornelia	13,842	60,241	54.52%	Mysidian Elder, Garland, Knight of Cornelia, Black Mage's Rod, Cornered by Black Mages, Black Waltz No. 3
Blue Base Scorpion Sentinel / Retrieve the Esper	8,915	37,469	53.43%	Scorpion Sentinel, Retrieve the Esper, Sahagin, Dragoon's Wyvern, Ice Magic
Gruul Humans Gladiolus Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	11,995	50,986	53.20%	Gladiolus Amicitia, Gysahl Greens, Summon: Fat Chocobo, Chocobo Kick, Priske's Wanderings

2 What Defines the Best Shells

Izzet | Sahagin / Blazing Bomb

This cluster contains 23,536 decks across 109,292 games and posts a baseline win rate of 57.14%. Its defining cards are Sahagin, Blazing Bomb, Shantotto, Tactician Magician, Call the Mountain Chocobo, The Emperor of Palamecia, Retrieve the Esper.

The strongest positive links in the shell are Sorceress's Schemes + Suplex, Call the Mountain Chocobo + Shantotto, Tactician Magician, Call the Mountain Chocobo + Ultros, Obnoxious Octopus. The build-around detector flags no high-confidence build-arounds as true support-dependent payoffs, while the shell-dependence score describes the broader class of cards that rely heavily on the surrounding shell.

Boros Humans | Weapons Vendor / Paladin's Arms

This cluster contains 15,088 decks across 67,889 games and posts a baseline win rate of 56.92%. Its defining cards are Weapons Vendor, Paladin's Arms, White Mage's Staff, Zidane, Tantalus Thief, Slash of Light, Item Shopkeep.

The strongest positive links in the shell are Dion, Bahamut's Dominant + Zidane, Tantalus Thief, Battle Menu + Slash of Light, Adelbert Steiner + Samurai's Katana. The build-around detector flags Paladin's Arms, Freya Crescent, Suplex as true support-dependent payoffs, while the shell-dependence score describes the broader class of cards that rely heavily on the surrounding shell.

Golgari Humans | Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter

This cluster contains 21,300 decks across 96,603 games and posts a baseline win rate of 56.53%. Its defining cards are **Shinra Reinforcements**, **Town Greeter**, **Cloud of Darkness**, **Fight On!**, **Exdeath**, **Void Warlock**, **Resentful Revelation**.

The strongest positive links in the shell are **Ardyn**, the **Usurper + Town Greeter**, **Ardyn**, the **Usurper + Vayne's Treachery**, **Cloud of Darkness + Town Greeter**. The build-around detector flags **Goobbue Gardener**, **Hecteyes** as true support-dependent payoffs, while the shell-dependence score describes the broader class of cards that rely heavily on the surrounding shell.

Orzhov Humans | Rufus Shinra / Judge Magister Gabranth

This cluster contains 15,263 decks across 68,185 games and posts a baseline win rate of 56.19%. Its defining cards are **Rufus Shinra**, **Judge Magister Gabranth**, **White Mage's Staff**, **White Auracite**, **Dwarven Castle Guard**, **Black Mage's Rod**.

The strongest positive links in the shell are **Overkill + Sidequest: Hunt the Mark**, **Gaelicat + Summon: Primal Odin**, **Dragoon's Lance + Judge Magister Gabranth**. The build-around detector flags **Rufus Shinra**, **Judge Magister Gabranth**, **Ahriman** as true support-dependent payoffs, while the shell-dependence score describes the broader class of cards that rely heavily on the surrounding shell.

3 Bombs: Cards That Are Good Alone

Card	Best cluster	Standalone lift	Drawn-game WR	Games
Nibelheim Aflame	Gruul Humans Gladius Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	13.59 pp	66.79%	557
Ardyn, the Usurper	Dimir Humans Locke Cole / Cornered by Black Mages	13.52 pp	69.28%	2575
Cryptic Command	Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	13.06 pp	68.05%	241
Dion, Bahamut's Dominant	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	12.94 pp	68.58%	1184
Seifer Almasy	Gruul Humans Gladius Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	12.12 pp	65.32%	940
Summon: Primal Odin	Golgari Humans Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter	11.24 pp	67.77%	2349

Card	Best cluster	Standalone lift	Drawn-game WR	Games
Jill, Shiva's Dominant	Rakdos Humans Mysidian Elder / Garland, Knight of Cornelia	10.52 pp	65.03%	143
Smuggler's Copter	Azorius Gaelicat / White Auracite	10.40 pp	66.28%	172
Esper Origins	Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	10.25 pp	65.24%	2779
Kuja, Genome Sorcerer	Rakdos Humans Mysidian Elder / Garland, Knight of Cornelia	9.96 pp	64.48%	3651
Choco-Comet	Izzet Sahagin / Blazing Bomb	9.35 pp	66.49%	11237
Vial Smasher the Fierce	Izzet Sahagin / Blazing Bomb	8.99 pp	66.13%	124

4 Build-Arounds and Shell Dependence

Card	Best cluster	Shell dependence	Support delta	Supported games
Paladin's Arms	Boros Humans Weapons Vendor / Paladin's Arms	10.0 / 10	3.50 pp	11510
Freya Crescent	Boros Humans Weapons Vendor / Paladin's Arms	10.0 / 10	5.12 pp	4834
Rufus Shinra	Orzhov Humans Rufus Shinra / Judge Magister Gabranth	10.0 / 10	5.79 pp	7253
Judge Magister Gabranth	Orzhov Humans Rufus Shinra / Judge Magister Gabranth	10.0 / 10	4.86 pp	7961
Gaelicat	Azorius Gaelicat / White Auracite	10.0 / 10	6.18 pp	13918
Slash of Light	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	10.0 / 10	4.83 pp	5053
Cargo Ship	Azorius Gaelicat / White Auracite	10.0 / 10	9.93 pp	4739
Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	10.0 / 10	4.36 pp	4983

Card	Best cluster	Shell dependence	Support delta	Supported games
Black Waltz No. 3	Rakdos Humans Mysidian Elder / Garland, Knight of Cornelia	10.0 / 10	13.18 pp	5444
Mysidian Elder	Rakdos Humans Mysidian Elder / Garland, Knight of Cornelia	10.0 / 10	11.37 pp	9544
Rydia, Summoner of Mist	Gruul Humans Gladiolus Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	10.0 / 10	7.96 pp	4490
Gigantoad	Gruul Humans Gladiolus Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	10.0 / 10	6.47 pp	4680

5 Dependency Cards

Card	Best cluster	Dependency	Standalone lift	Games
Shinra Reinforcements	Golgari Humans Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter	1.524	3.36 pp	17141
Paladin's Arms	Boros Humans Weapons Vendor / Paladin's Arms	1.049	-0.58 pp	12294
Gaelicat	Azorius Gaelicat / White Auracite	0.952	1.39 pp	14995
Summon: Fat Chocobo	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	0.856	2.76 pp	8248
Retrieve the Esper	Blue Base Scorpion Sentinel / Retrieve the Esper	0.816	1.70 pp	7703
Slash of Light	Boros Humans Weapons Vendor / Paladin's Arms	0.801	1.78 pp	11216
Sage's Nouliths	Blue Base Scorpion Sentinel / Retrieve the Esper	0.796	-1.45 pp	3174
Cloud of Darkness	Golgari Humans Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter	0.731	6.91 pp	14102

Card	Best cluster	Dependency	Standalone lift	Games
Rook Turret	Blue Base Scorpion Sentinel / Retrieve the Esper	0.728	-3.00 pp	3044
Town Greeter	Golgari Humans Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter	0.692	4.10 pp	20869
Suplex	Boros Humans Weapons Vendor / Paladin's Arms	0.690	-0.80 pp	8309
Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	0.680	-0.63 pp	5570

6 Best Draft Priorities

Card	Best cluster	Pick score	Draft win lift	Rarity
Cloud of Darkness	Golgari Humans Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter	10.0 / 10	1.80 pp	uncommon
Omega, Heartless Evolution	Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	10.0 / 10	1.13 pp	uncommon
Choco-Comet	Izzet Sahagin / Blazing Bomb	10.0 / 10	2.17 pp	uncommon
Kuja, Genome Sorcerer	Rakdos Humans Mysidian Elder / Garland, Knight of Cornelia	10.0 / 10	2.81 pp	rare
Ardyn, the Usurper	Golgari Humans Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter	10.0 / 10	3.58 pp	rare
Ice Magic	Izzet Sahagin / Blazing Bomb	10.0 / 10	1.01 pp	common
White Auracite	Azorius Gaelicat / White Auracite	10.0 / 10	1.30 pp	common
Thunder Magic	Izzet Sahagin / Blazing Bomb	9.8 / 10	1.11 pp	common
Ignis Scientia	Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	10.0 / 10	1.01 pp	uncommon
Esper Origins	Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	10.0 / 10	4.40 pp	rare

Card	Best cluster	Pick score	Draft win lift	Rarity
Samurai's Katana	Boros Humans Weapons Vendor / Paladin's Arms	10.0 / 10	2.70 pp	uncommon
Gladiolus Amicitia	Gruul Humans Gladiolus Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	10.0 / 10	0.65 pp	uncommon

7 Most Striking Positive Pairs

Pair	Cluster	Quality	Pair WR	Games
Ardyn, the Usurper, Undercity Dire Rat	Dimir Humans Locke Cole / Cornered by Black Mages	2.61	78.23%	395
Ardyn, the Usurper, Town Greeter	Golgari Humans Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter	1.74	77.15%	674
Summon: Fat Chocobo, Yuna, Hope of Spira	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	1.72	74.44%	223
Chocobo Racetrack, Esper Origins	Gruul Humans Gladiolus Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	1.58	73.40%	94
Ardyn, the Usurper, Vayne's Treachery	Golgari Humans Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter	1.36	76.42%	530
Cloud of Darkness, Town Greeter	Golgari Humans Shinra Reinforcements / Town Greeter	1.34	69.25%	3340
Rydia, Summoner of Mist, Summon: Fenrir	Gruul Humans Gladiolus Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	1.33	65.75%	508
Balamb T-Rexaur, Cloud of Darkness	Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	1.12	70.13%	904
Sorceress's Schemes, Suplex	Izzet Sahagin / Blazing Bomb	1.12	68.65%	1764
Esper Origins, Reach the Horizon	Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	1.11	73.86%	153
Omega, Heartless Evolution, Reach the Horizon	Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	1.10	67.69%	876

Pair	Cluster	Quality	Pair WR	Games
Esper Origins, Travel the Overworld	Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	1.08	73.81%	378
Gran Pulse Ochu, Travel the Overworld	Simic Humans Ignis Scientia / Omega, Heartless Evolution	1.06	66.70%	1081
Call the Mountain Chocobo, Shantotto, Tactician Magician	Izzet Sahagin / Blazing Bomb	1.05	66.34%	4441

8 Anti-Synergies Worth Respecting

Pair	Cluster	Anti-score	Pair WR	Games
Aerith Rescue Mission, Fate of the Sun-Cryst	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	0.68	47.69%	411
Goobbue Gardener, Gysahl Greens	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	0.67	45.36%	474
Quina, Qu Gourmet, White Mage's Staff	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	0.54	46.13%	297
Blitzball Shot, The Crystal's Chosen	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	0.50	48.98%	147
Ambrosia Whiteheart, Slash of Light	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	0.40	49.88%	407
Gigantoad, Sidequest: Raise a Chocobo	Gruul Humans Gladiolus Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	0.38	46.21%	396
Balamb T-Rexaur, Blitzball Shot	Gruul Humans Gladiolus Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	0.36	49.46%	556
Choco-Comet, Sazh's Chocobo	Gruul Humans Gladiolus Amicitia / Gysahl Greens	0.34	49.55%	222
Blitzball Shot, Gysahl Greens	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	0.33	49.32%	292
Dragoon's Lance, Quina, Qu Gourmet	Selesnya Humans Rinoa Heartilly / Garnet, Princess of Alexandria	0.33	48.75%	160

9 Bottom-Line Reading

This report treats the format as a deck ecosystem rather than a flat card ranking. The strongest cards show up in the bomb table because they win on their own. The cards that pull a cluster together show up in the build-around and dependency tables because they need a shell. The pair and anti-synergy sections then explain which combinations reinforce a winning plan and which combinations look attractive in draft but underperform together.