

# The New Constructed Deck Check Technique

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I would like to present you new Deck Check Technique based on the same idea as [Australian Deck Check Technique](#) for limited. It was invented for small PPTQ but it can be used also for larger tournaments. Despite this technique was invented for constructed events it can be also used for limited tournaments.

## Pros and Cons of the new method

### Pros:

- easy to learn,
- can be used both for constructed and limited (for the former one I really advice to use Australian Deck Check Technique if possible),
- players do not need to shuffle their own decks after the deck check,
- it is flexible, so you can perform some actions both before and after checking with decklist and gives you more space in unexpected situations,
- it takes about the same or even less time to perform in comparison to the classic method with sorting (remember that you have already +3 minutes because there is no need for shuffling ),
- when you are alone you are able to check both decks in 10 minutes and still give just 10 minutes of extra time (if you include +3 minutes of extra time).

### Cons:

- dependent on the clarity of the decklist,
- it might be more difficult for some judges to find card patterns this way.

## How to do it

The whole idea is based on not changing the order of cards in players libraries. First of all look at the youtube video with the method explained (or read the explanation below):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgP4kyEjte4>

Method step by step (you can skip it if you are already familiar with method or you watched the

video for the link above):

- prepare color pens (use flashy colors other than blue and black)
- place the deck wider side towards you (it is easier to flip cards that way)
- review the decklist contents for any patterns (lands/spells/creatures sorted – it might help a lot)
- start flipping cards from the top of the library (two cards each time – one after another)
- search and mark them on the decklist on the right side of the name with vertical line – if you reach the number declared on the decklist slash the number on the left side of the name with color pen (while searching for card names you can skip rows slashed on the left)
- perform sideboard check
- check the sleeves (you can also do this before making the deck check)

It is very important to not make the mistake while flipping the cards. Because of this the golden can be used:

„If someone disturbs you while doing this kind of deck check, and you already flipped some cards – mark them on decklist first, than put your pen at top of unchecked library, and answer any concerns”.

## **Preparations**

The first thing you definitely need are color pens. You need some with clearly visible at blank white paper colors like: pink, green, purple. Try to avoid yellow and any kind of pale colors. I do not recommend to use blue or black – players are usually using those on their own. If your pen does not differ from players decklist it will be much harder for you to perform a deck check. You still can do it without color pen, but it will be harder and will take more time.

Second, it would be nice to have a clipboard with you (just put decks/sideboards/deckboxes on it and carry all to deck check table). It is extremely useful for grabbing players' decks at once without revealing bottom cards of the libraries (if you try to put decks into deckboxes there is slight chance that someone will see a bottom card of library). It is also useful for giving them decks back as you can put the clipboard on the table, explain the players to not look at the contents of libraries, especially bottom cards and than return everything to them.

Third is deck check table. You don't need much space as you don't „pile stack” the deck. You do not show the contents of a deck at once so you can do it quite close to the tournament itself (and cover the only visible card if someone approaches). It is extremely important for Eternal formats,

where the players are worried about their expensive decks. You still should not let them look at decks during the deck check, but you can just sit two tables away from them, so they can see their decks all the time.

Last one, before starting a deck check, review a decklist to find any patterns (lands, spells, creatures sorted, etc.) it will be easier to perform a check with this knowledge.

## **Communication**

Communication is one of most important things to remember while using this method. It is quite big change and players are used to look what was on top or bottom of their libraries. There are multiple things you can do to prevent this from happening.

First of all make a HJ announcement in which he will tell that you are using a new method and during deck check judges will not change order of players libraries. Because of this when deck check is called ask players to not touch their libraries. Judge will handle their decks and deckboxes.

For Eternal formats it is advised to make deck check next to the playing tables, so players should not worry about their expensive decks (GP scenario). If you are working on other kind of event ensure that deck check table is clearly visible from any place at the venue or allow players to look at the deck check from the distance (in the way they can track where their decks are, but they do not see the order of the cards).

While giving the decks back repeat once more that order of cards in libraries was not changed, so the players should not look at the bottoms of their libraries, just pass them to their opponent to shuffle. If players insist they want to shuffle their decks again – allow them one or two simple riffle shuffles. Players need some time to get used to changes. On the other hand remember that we spare most time on shuffling, so do not allow players to do multiple pile shuffles – they did it before. They need to trust judges at any point of the tournament, and a deck check is no exception. Remember to not be harsh while communicating changes – the more welcoming you are, the faster players will get used to the new method.

The last thing – if someone rises a call during the deck check, and you are alone, and call leads to an investigation you can just grab the decks, give them back with time extension and handle the call. While using both techniques we waste time because the deck check is uncompleted, but using the new method save us three minutes at least.

## **Mid-round Deck Check**

There are in general two things you can do while performing a mid round Deck Check. Honestly both are viable choice and you should pick the one that suits you more.

First one is to review the sideboard to see which cards was taken out, and which cards to expect in the main board. This method was suggested after tests performed by multiple judges.

Second method is more straightforward. You just flip the cards as usual, but you also look for sideboard if you do not find a card in mainboard. You can use this method if you forgot to review sideboard before the deck check. This option is more useful if you are familiar with the format of the event, because you will be most likely able to distinguish sideboard cards from the main deck choices.

## **Handling Errors**

If you encounter any errors (in the decklist or your own ones) and you are unsure if it is the decklist error of your own mistake there is a simple way to double check that. First of all make a question mark next to the suspicious card and finish making the deck check. Than start reviewing the deck for the exact number of a certain card that caused problem (pull them a little bit up from rest of a deck). This way you should be able to check the library about a certain concern after a deck check. This might happen if you suspect that you flipped two cards at once and did not mark one on the decklist or there is some card missing. Common sign of this will be flipping just one card at the end of the deck check (remember to count the number of cards on the decklist – someone might be using 61 mainboard). Remember that you just look for a cards that do not have full match on decklist – because the rest is fine. This way you spend just 30 extra seconds reviewing a deck – with no need to reuse the method or switch to the classic one.

If you find any suspicious sleeve or card you want to look over later or you want to see the whole playset of sleeves you can just flip them 90 degrees and finish deck check. This way cards retain their position and you can still compare marked cards.

If you change the order of cards in library do not worry about it much. Just shuffle the deck once or twice. Changing random to random is nothing bad. What is more important an opponent will shuffle it anyway.

If deck requires either a fix or a penalty you proceed as normal – you fix the deck with a player and remember to give both players additional three minutes because they need to shuffle. If you are handling just decklist errors and there is no need to look at the deck you can save time and give time

extension without additional three minutes for shuffling.

## **Marked Card Concerns**

Some of the judges prefer to check card patterns while deck is stacked – some do not. Opinions are splitted, but this concern leads us to the one important conclusion. Do not be hasty while flipping the cards. While flipping you see all the card backs (a full one), so take a look at them while you flip. It will slow you down by a half of minute, but still you have three minutes bonus for not shuffling, so better to spend it on inspecting the sleeves. If you find some suspicious card just flip it 90 degrees, so after a deck check you can compare all suspicious sleeves without changing the order of cards.

Remember that you are still supposed to review card sleeves anyway, you can just skip looking at the card backs. Some of the judges prefer to check the sleeves before sorting the deck in the classic method, because they want to check if some pattern is visible in a shuffled deck. It advantages the new method, because if you forget to do the check before checking the decklist you can still perform it afterwards, which is not possible in the classic method (it can make you miss some card markings).

We also need to remember that deck check is not the only possibility to catch marked cards. In many of cases observations during a round leads to a deck check – if it is the case we will probably just focus on sleeves without checking with the list. It is very important to watch how players shuffle while being on the floor, watch on their sleeves while they draw their opening hand and be suspicious if they use white bordered basics in full black border decks.

## **Conclusion**

I really like the method, even if it has some concerns. This is mostly because the judges are able to learn it quite easy and we are the one who can improve. We can not expect players to make better decklists or to write more clearly. We can try hard to improve any aspect of judging to make our events running on schedule and creating the best atmosphere for our players. You can handle this article to anyone who struggles to make deck checks. You can use it on single judge events. You can try it on multiple judge events if you are prepared. It gives you one more option for making deck checks if needed (for example if you judge in a place with almost completely no space for pile stacking a deck).

It will take some time for players to get used to changes. It will require you to practice a bit, but

I think it is worth it if your event can run faster.

Big thanks to anyone who participated in wide tests of this method. I hope you will continue to use it and you will contribute to improve it.

You can also read the discussion at [Judge Apps Forums](#).