

Prince Elien deck build (Phoenix Elves)

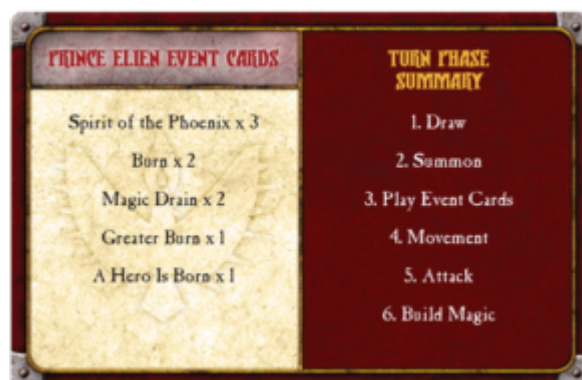
2013/10/27

I enjoy playing Prince Elien and his Phoenix Elves as I feel playing him requires a tight balance between defensive play and focused aggression. This guide will be about a control oriented deck that denies magic where possible. I feel that's the strongest possible one for this summoner. It will not include second summoner units or mercenaries (for now). Summoner Wars is a game by Plaid Hat Games. It's available on android / iOS / Vassal.

Strategy

Direct aggression is pretty suicidal with Prince Elien due to his low health units. Also his whole deck excels at taking out units quickly (with high dice units, precise and wound events). Therefore I generally start a game with defensive posturing and a lot of magic building. I make sure I don't give away any kills needlessly and I use the warrior and four range archers to take potshots that are safe or intended to lure the enemy to me (without giving up too much space). Very powerful in this stage is to take a shot at a unit and then kill of your own unit to get and deny the magic. Most commons get built and I make sure to stay relatively safe with Prince Elien. The magic is for a champion or fire beast. Added bonus is that you can immediately play any magic drains you get and thus get a magic lead.

Next it depends on which faction you're facing and how lucky you have been with your draw or dice. If I have a good advantage I'll switch to the offensive. This means summoning a good champion and threatening his summoner or taking out a few more commons. To get this done safely, good positioning and flanking is essential. If he summons a counter champion or multiple commons the idea is to



use your events and extra magic to kill them off quickly. This causes you to keep a magic lead and slowly strangle your opponent. Ideally this should leave an end game in which you either have more units left or more magic.

Key to remember is that Prince Elien and his units have relatively high dice (and precise) but low health. So when you attack his units you want to kill them off immediately and make sure he can't instant kill your units in return. If your opponent turtles during any time in the game you can move Prince Elien up (with support of course) and start hogging the enemy walls. If it's a very offensive faction or if it's not going too well, you can play it slow and use your units more defensively. Personally I feel Elien's deck has a few weaknesses. One is that he doesn't really have good units to strike beyond walls or blockers (only Rahlee and Fire Drake basically). Secondly is that he's weak to assassination. This can force you to have way more units on the board then you'd like to have against factions with high movement or tricks.

Tactics

- Build a lot of your first commons (and don't be too afraid to use or build events early). You want a decent amount of magic and a possible champion quickly. I generally build all commons until I have 5-7 magic.
- Don't be afraid to kill your own units. Keeping your unit count lower can be more important than the board position. Choosing to hold on to events like magic drain can seriously clog an opponent's hand (while you can use yours).
- Prince Elien with a champion and one other 2 dice unit can take down a wall in 2 turns. Against defensively playing factions you can punish them quickly.
- Wall placement is especially important for Prince Elien. He doesn't have that many good ranged units, so you can use your wall placement to reduce the effectiveness of the enemy's ranged units. Also flank your champions with a wall or another unit as you don't want them to get hit from 2-3 sides at once. I like playing walls offensively with Prince Elien to both stump an first attack and get ready for a counter attack.



Deck build (16 / 26 magic for the champions / commons)

- 1 Fire Drake
- 1 Maelena
- 1 Holleas (for the fire beast buff)
- 8 Warriors (6 is the offline maximum)
- 3 Archers (2 initial, 1 to build)
- 1 Guardian (the initial one)
- 6 Fire Beasts (4 is the offline maximum)









Honestly, the choice between Maelena, Kaeseeall, Laleya or Holleas is somewhat of a toss-up. I've now included Holleas to synergize with a Hero is Born and the Fire Beasts. And Maelena because the idea here is not to be too dependent on range attacks (and make sure you get the kills in), but I might switch back to one of the others for the ranged combo options. Exact number of commons might change (dependent on experience ;)). Note: If your playing offline and don't have this amount of warriors / fire beasts I'd use some extra fencers / archers / guardian's although they are much worse then Warriors.


Match up analysis







I might do a faction by faction analysis eventually, but I'll start this off with a few general observations. One thing I tend to take into consideration very heavily in a matchup is what options the opposing faction has. Against a faction without a lot of blocker removal and / or ranged units I like to go very offensive (including Prince Elien). In example: Mountain Vargath or Fallen Kingdom. Another thing is that this deck is actually very strong against most early attacks, so when playing against Prince Elien it can be best to play it defensively. That might force Prince Elien to build events that he'd prefer to use offensively.






First summoner specific cards

Card	Deck	Notes
	Base	As he has only four health, be very, very careful with him. Having said that, I like to use him offensively against factions that don't have a lot of movement or placement tricks as that means making the most out of your powerful ability and high AV (put him up against 2 enemy walls in example). He can also be very useful in defense, taking out attacking commons and finishing off champions easily. Use blaze step to protect him.
	Base (x3)	Ideally play this on the highest dice units (like fire drake) and against enemy champions. I dislike playing this on Elien as he already has a 2 dice precise attack. I'd use it against commons if they have 2 or 3 health. And I regularly build these if I have multiple and no use for them.
	Base (x2)	Preferably used on champions or to eliminate importantly situated commons.
	Base (x2)	The most powerful event in this deck. A lot of my plays revolve around getting this event out.
	Base	Ideally only use this on commons if you can get a surprise attack in on something more important. Great for combos to instantly kill a champion.
	Base	Build for magic most of the time. I'd definitely not use it if you already have another champion in hand.

Generic cards

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	Base	-1	The guaranteed wound means she's basically a 3 AV champion with 1 hit already in. So especially great against 1-2 health commons. Relatively low health though and not ranged, so be sure to not expose her needlessly.

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	Base	0	Her ability is pretty powerful, but somewhat situational. You can in example use it to draw in a unit for other units to hit or to force them to move away (and thus not attack if they're melee, while you can still attack as she's ranged). Note: Her control only lasts YOUR turn.
	Base	0	His special is extremely good at exerting pressure and buying time. The enemy has to waste time repositioning units and build magic and / or summon units to deal with the fire drake. Meanwhile you can either blast through their walls (often being able to put hits in on the summoner) or take out specific units with his three AV. Make sure to protect his flanks and reinforce him where necessary though.
	Base (x6)	-1	This is a defense oriented unit with an attack oriented ability. Which makes me prefer the fire beast to these (1 more magic for 1 more dice and 2 more health). Only really useful to slow down pushes in my opinion.
	Base (x6)	0	Extremely useful. Summon, optionally use spirit of the phoenix, attack, and blaze step away to safety. Can also blaze step to cover Elien after he attacked. And good to stall enemies from crowding your walls or units. Another use is that they can really take advantage of walls that are a lot apart (which can be newly summoned walls). Also useful for taking potshots at wall and then blaze step back to hit it again next turn. Finally: You can kill them after a successful kill on a common to be magic neutral on summoning them.
	Base (x6)	0	Useful to get a free hit in on a melee unit or to draw an enemy unit in to kill it, but that's about it as they die very easily. I often kill the initial units for magic (after letting them attack first ofcourse).
	Base (x3)	W	

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	Reinf	-2	Pretty much useless. The only situation in which I wanted to use her was against a low health summoner who was turtling behind his walls. And even then you only get 1 die against him for 4 magic spent.
	Reinf	0	She can do precise attacks for three dice at point blank range. Other then that she's pretty comparable to the other ranged champions of the phoenix elves.
	Reinf	+1	Probably the only hero for which a hero is born would be useful. An interesting use is to move her aggressively and and then summon a fire beast deep in enemy territory. Also useful for defending.
	Reinf (x5)	0	Pretty useful, but make sure they are worth their cost. Especially useful against low health commons and to have a sturdy blocker / flanker for Elien / a champion. With the two AV they can also help in finishing off high health units.
	Reinf (x5)	0	Only good against decks with alot of low AV, low health commons. Situationally useful as very cheap blocker or 1 dice suicider.

* SSSCF = Super Simple Summoning cost formula = attack value + base health + 1 if ranged - (2 if common OR -3 if champion) - magic cost. I haven't included the worth of the ability as that's generally controversial.

References

- All Phoenix Elves cards (especially strategy section and comments are useful)
- A Doug's Guide To Summoner Wars podcast (strategy discussion and community news)
- Mythacle Battleplan for Summoner Wars (deck builder and I got the images from there)
- Summoner Wars on iOS by Playdek (I played some test games here)