

Sera Eldwyn deck build (Vanguards)

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Playing Sera Eldwyn's deck well means you need to use your Vanguards champions and keep them healed. The commons are for protection and assassination. That is why this guide focuses on heavy champion play. It will not include second summoner units (or mercenaries) as I've not yet played or analyzed the second summoner. They will probably be added in an update to this post once I have had experience with them. Summoner Wars is a game by Plaid Hat Games. It's available on android / iOS / Vassal.

Basic idea

Sera's deck with reinforcements is considered one of the weaker competitive decks. One reason for this is that she has the same weakness some other factions have, namely a few units with just one dice to throw and not that many ranged units. Another reason is that she has one of the weakest (or most situational) sets of events. Still, I don't yet agree with her deck being weak. This is because she has units with generally high health and her ability allows her to out match pretty any other faction if it comes down to champions versus champions. And she has a number of units / options to assassinate or make surprise attacks.



Because of her healing ability, events and unit abilities a defensive, careful style of play fits Sera well. Naturally this shouldn't stop you from going offensive or wall hogging where there's room for it. Just as long as you protect her / and flank her champions carefully. Having a champion killed before Sera can heal it is one of her biggest fears. So wall placement, positioning and keeping Sera close to her champions is essential.

Some tactic and combo suggestions:

- Summoning surge combined with a wall is great to do a surprise attack on the enemy as you can summon in the event phase. And you can summon more than they expect due to the extra magic. Just make sure you don't over extend.
- Holy Judgement stacks, so they are devastating if you have two or three priests rolling for five or even seven dice. Instant summoner or champion kill! Because of this it can be worth it to save it for a while to see if you can get such a combo off (summoning one extra priest ideally).
- Cavalry Knights, Angels and Archangel are great for having a lot of mobility and thus repositioning fast or doing a surprise attack. Do remember you're generally trading these kinds of attacks for a magic disadvantage, so weigh how much this will benefit you.



Deck build (17 / 19 magic for the champions / commons)

- 1 Jacob Eldwyn
- 1 Kalon Lightbringer
- 1 Leah Goodwin
- 6 Guardian Knights (3 initial)
- 1 Stalwart Archer (1 initial)
- 4 Priest (1 initial)
- 4 Angels
- 3 Cavalry Knights (the only two dice common)



This whole deck build is about the champions. The choice of the champions included is pretty unoriginal, but strong. Honestly, vanguards commons are not good enough for Colleen to really be worth it and Raechel is too situational for her cost and attack value. The only champion I had a hard time leaving out is Archangel. If you run him, I'd run him instead of Kalon or possibly Leah. Jacob is simply too much of a beast not to include. The commons I included are mostly to have versatility and combo potential. The Guardian Knights are blockers for emergencies. The Angel's and Cavalry Knights are the one's that can be used offensively if the situation requires it.

Playing the faction

As I said before, I'd play this faction cautiously in the starting phase. Reposition your units (Sera and the Guardian Knights) to take out any aggressive attackers. Sera can be used for attacks on enemy commons against *mêlée* factions as the guardian knights can protect her. The commons, especially the stalwart archers are expendable. If a common gets hurt, I generally try to finish them off myself to deny the attacker the magic. The only unit I'd prefer to let live in this stage is the Priest; so he can combo with a possible Holy Judgment later. As I feel Sera is best played champion heavy this is all part of building towards a first champion and making use of summoning surge if available. So don't play commons unless it's necessary and whittle down your unit count instead. If possible get Leah out there quickly. This will have the added benefit of getting some cards in your discard pile so you can start using summoning surges.









Once you get a champion out, try to keep Sera and the champion close together so you can heal the champion. You can use guardian knights and angels as cheap flankers that will protect their sides. Also try to place your walls so that it's harder to flank you. I tend to play my walls pretty aggressively to maximize the area I have to maneuver in. If you get a chance: It can also be pretty useful to suicide a cavalry knight against a summoner or to get some easy magic, especially if you don't pull out Leah early as that will give you some magic in your discard pile for Summoning Surge. And often the opponent will be a bit more careful with his units. Once you're getting closer to the endgame is where Sera's ability really kicks in. If you have some magic left you can outlast most other champions.


Match up analysis





I might do a faction by faction analysis eventually, but I'll start this off with a few general observations. Take into consideration which factions have units or events can deal out a great amount of damage in one turn. Those are the worst to play against. Phoenix elves in example can kill Kalon in one turn without even too much luck needed.





First summoner specific cards




Card	Deck	Notes
	Base	Healing two health for one magic doesn't sound like much compared to other summoner abilities, but is actually very powerful. The problem however is that you have to be next to the target. So careful positioning to do this in time and safely is essential. Oh and her ability costs an attack. I dislike healing for 1.
	Base (x3)	Situational event, but it stacks, so it can be huge if it comes at a right time or if you plan for it. Summoning in example two, three priests and then playing two or three holy judgments at once will give you enough dice to one hit most summoners and champions.
	Base (x2)	I almost always build this. I can't really think of a realistic scenario in which I wouldn't build this. I'd generally rather kill off the common with the one wound then heal it.
	Base (x2)	Best event in the Vanguards deck. Not because of the three magic gained (which is good, but worse then magic drain), but because it allows summoning in the event phase. So you can do stuff like drop down a wall, summoning surge and hit an enemy summoner with two champions. Do note that you need magic in your discard pile to use summoning surge. So use some before you play this!
	Base	I'll often build this, especially if I get it early in the game. However, it can be situationally useful if you really need a champion healed that's not next to Sera and Sera is in a safe spot.
	Base	Build it unless you have a strategy which requires a specific champion (like Leah).





Generic cards



Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	Base	-2	Three movement and flying makes him useful for assassination or quick repositioning. In Sera's deck can fly him back to get healed after he has taken some damage. Just don't get him killed before you can heal him.

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	Base	0	Kalon is basically Sera's living shield. And she can heal him after he has attacked, so he can attack with 4 dice and then get healed back up. Still, remember that Sera only heals two and can be attacked instead of Kalon. In Samuel's or Moyra's deck you could use Ultimate Shield of Light respectively Blinding Light / Divine Intervention to make use of his four attack value longer.
	Base	-2	She has a very powerful ability that's greatly stunted by her only having one attack value and four health. It is pretty hard to get good value out of her because of that. So a situational hero (which could be good against a faction with a lot of 1 health commons). If used in combination with the Crusaders that give her one extra attack power she's probably good enough to use as having the opponent discard a card from his hand is very devastating. Also note her synergy with Divine Intervention which means she's excellent in Moyra's deck.
	Base (x8)	0	Easily the best one cost common in the Vanguard's army due to their ability to deflect damage from a more important target. If you move one next to an enemy ranged unit it won't be able to attack another type of unit unless it moves away.
	Base (x5)	0	The main problem I have with their ability is that it's pretty easy to work around and it's hard to set it up usefully. And if you lose one of the stalwart archers the others become weaker. And they cost two magic. Even in Samuel's deck (where they don't die as easily) I don't think they're worth it. Together with Defenders they become slightly better but probably still too easy to play around.

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	Base (x5)	-1	I'd generally only summon these to use them in combination with Holy Judgment as I dislike spending the one magic to heal a champion or common when I can use Sera to heal for two. And commons that get hurt generally get killed off by me. In Samuel's deck these are even worse as they can't be combo'ed. In Moyra's deck you could use them to heal the harder to kill commons, but I don't feel they fit Moyra very well.
	Base (x3)	W	
	Reinf	-1	Interesting ability which basically makes your own commons live longer. It generally won't stop two health commons from dying against most factions though as every die still has a 50% chance of hitting. So pretty situational. Pretty much useless in Samuel's deck as he already has this ability. Together with Crusaders she becomes a three attack champion for six which is usable, but I would still not use her in Samuel's deck.
	Reinf	-1	Three ranged dice coupled together with a powerful area of effect ability. Very useful champion which only weakness lies in his low health; so keep him close to Sera or safe. I'd say he's just as powerful in Samuel's deck.

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	Reinf	-1	Excellent early game champion in Sera's deck if you can build her attack power up to three or four dice quickly. You then basically get four dice for 3 magic and you can keep your unit count low. And if she dies you can summon another champion. Note: Pretty much the only champion for which a hero is born should be used. I feel this champion is much worse in Samuel's deck as Samuel isn't inclined to have as much magic piled up and can't use Hero is Born to get her out early. The same applies for Moyra's deck, however with a crusader she can go up to five attack die (and she starts off with one).
	Reinf (x5)	0	I mostly summon these to get a last hit in on a summoner or to use them for flanking or wall hogging. Other then that I don't tend to use them that much. Their flight ability does mean you can easily reposition them to do whatever you want with them (like block walls). In Samuel's deck it can be useful to include a few to prevent yourself from having too many two cost commons. Especially if you're running expensive champions.
	Reinf (x5)	0	It has two dice and thus is automatically a good unit for the Vanguard. And it has the Rider ability so you can use it to get that extra two dice in from that position no other unit can get to. However, they do cost a lot so they might keep you from summoning that third champion or healing a bit more. So be sure to only use them when it's worth it (like getting two hits in on Elien). Also useful in defense.

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	Second	-3	She basically only has a 33% chance to get a wound instead of a 66% chance, but only has three health. And her ability also works against direct wound mechanisms, so those become a 50% chance to receive a wound. She only has three life though, so you don't want to expose her to too many dice rolls or play her against factions that can negate her ability. Four dice though! In Sera's deck she's stronger due to healing, Intercession and Summoning Surge, but still be careful with her.
	Second	0	A hero I'm not that fond of. She can be a huge tank and her ability can halt and tie up enemy commons in their tracks, but I feel she doesn't have enough of a punch and her ability is too situational. Even in Sera's deck I feel Kalon's ability is generally much more useful as one of the Vanguard's main problem is not having enough attack dice.
	Second	+1	This hero I'd definitely want to use if I'm running some woeful brothers. Especially since the Vanguard lack two attack ranged commons. With his four range on the special you can often keep all woeful brothers on the field in his range. I'd avoid running him in Sera's deck as the woeful brothers will die much easier and therefore there's less chance of synergy with this hero.
	Second (x7)	0	It's special can be pretty useful to set up an assassination or to get a surround or an enemy unit. It's probably almost on par with the Cavalry Knight's and the Warrior Angel's specials. However, if you are able to synergize with Master Bullock and the Strong Spirits event card (in Samuel's deck), these commons are top notch. Their ability also triggers on ranged attacks, but they can only swap with an adjacent unit.

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	Second (x5)	0	Basically an upgraded angel. Pretty useful as it has two dice and can move through walls and other units and thereby can quickly move to where it needs to go. I'd be wary of including only two magic commons though, so if I have a lot of those already I prefer normal Angels.
	Second (x6)	0	My initial reaction to these was, meh. However, they can be actually quite useful as mobile summoner defenders. Their ability basically allows you to teleport them along with your summoner giving you extra movement and allowing you to move to spots you normally wouldn't be able to get to. And they are not that easy to bring down. In Sera's deck they're quite a bit less useful as they die too quickly for their cost. And they get 'placed', so they can in example get on and off vine walls easily. Very interesting in Moyra's deck though.

* 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 Vanguard's 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)