

Samuel Farthen deck build (Vanguards)

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The basic idea with Samuel Farthen's Vanguards deck is early aggression. Pressure your opponent with your commons protected with Samuel's Shield of Light. He plays a lot like Sunderved, just with a defense aura instead of an attack aura. This guide will include both first and second summoner units, but no mercenaries (for now). 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

I haven't played him competitively a lot yet, so I'm not entirely sure how strong his deck is in comparison. So far it seems like he's pretty comparable to Sunderved in terms of strength. Which means I don't consider him top-tier as I feel he lacks mechanisms to really surprise or assassinate the opponent and he will lose

in magic efficiency to in example Deep Dwarves and Filth. This will often mean you need to carve out your advantage early game or you will be in trouble later on. If you are facing Samuel: Don't underestimate how hard to kill his commons will be under the Shield of Light. Your opponent on average has to roll four dice to kill a two hit point unit instead of three.



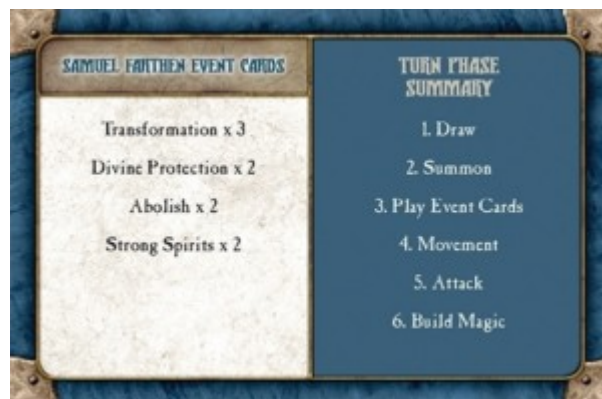
Some tactic and combo suggestions:

- Master Bullock with Woeful Brothers is a great combination as it both gives you a ranged champion and ranged commons. And you might actually get use out of Strong Spirits.
- Using honor guards basically means you get to move extra units for free and move them to positions you'd normally not get to. Like a hard to cover flank off Samuel's. Using them together with Archangel could be quite interesting.
- Cavalry Knights, Angels, Warrior Angels and Archangel have mobility and can reposition fast for doing a surprise attack or bolstering your defense. Just be

careful not to use them for assassination when you have no follow-up or it will cost you.

Deck build without mercenaries

- 1 Jacob Eldwyn
- 1 Master Bullock
- 1 Sybil Swancott
- 6 Woeful Brother
- 3 Honor Guard
- 1 Warrior Angel (the initial one)
- 2 Guardian Knight
- 3 Angel
- 3 Cavalry Knight



The idea here is that most of the time you will be playing commons to have early pressure and use Samuel's strengths. For that you need commons that either can get to the front quickly (cavalry knight, angel, warrior angel) or that can help protect Samuel very effectively (guardian knight, honor guard). And of course the woeful brothers for their synergy in this deck. The reason for some angels and guardian knights is that they are cheaper so you can get more units out and still have some magic for champions. I might change those ratio's based on further experience. Ideally I'd like even more two dice units in there.

If you play the commons (which generally you should) you won't be able to play all champions, so you can then afford to build at least one champion and you can select which one to summon that will suit the match up / situation you are in best. That's one reason I included three expensive one's. The second reason is that in certain

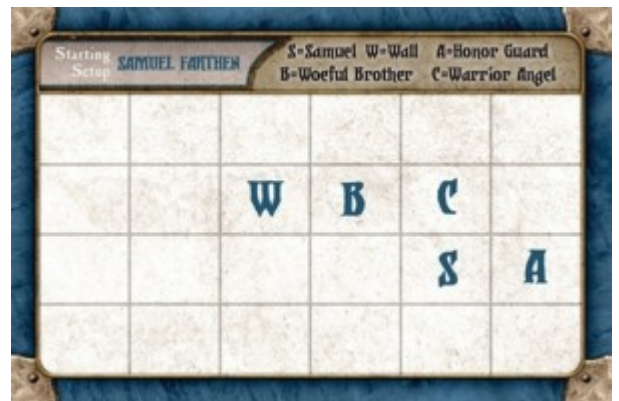


match ups you can go champion heavy and still have a shot as all three are ranged beasts. Master Bullock was included because of his synergy with the woeful brothers. Jacob because of his awesome ability and ranged dice. And Sybil for the four ranged dice. The only real alternative I'm still considering is swapping out Sybil for Archangel for even more mobility. Other options don't really seem worth it.

Playing the faction

As I said before, I'd play this faction aggressively in the starting phase. Move all your units forward and let the Honor Guard hitch onto Samuel so he can keep the flanks protected and even extend your attack range. Clog enemy summoning spots and try to keep your commons near enough to Samuel to maximize their effective range and protect him. The initial wall can be used to summon reinforcements and you should probably place any new walls on the fourth row. Also remember to build enough magic to summon as many reinforcements as you need (only summoning when it gains you a benefit though). You could even finish off your own hurt commons as you can ignore the shield of light on them. If everything is going well, you should be losing some commons but killing enough commons yourself to get a decent amount of magic (always prioritize finishing off enemy units).

A thing to watch out for is Samuel getting blocked in enemy territory by smart enemy wall placement. You can prevent that by not moving him past the fifth row unless there's a really good reason to or by guarding his rear with a unit. Having him next to an enemy wall is generally effective as you can then block off all sides



of that wall while still giving all those units the Shield of Light. Concerning champions: I tend to build magic aggressively and only summon when necessary. That often means you get enough magic to also bring out a champion. I'd recommend that as you only have three attacks per turn and having a champion use one of those attacks generally is worth it in my opinion. And all three these champions have very powerful specials to add more pressure with. Another thing to do watch for, is using your Transformation events at the right time. They are ideal to use when you're either fighting on multiple fronts or if Samuel has a big juicy target to hit hard.




The main way to lose is if either Samuel gets hurt too much (he doesn't have Shield of Light himself) or if your push is not successful and your opponent outlasts you. To prevent this I'd use the more maneuverable units of the Vanguard to pick off high mana cost commons that are out of the range of your summoner 'group' or to surprise / box in the probably retreating enemy



summoner. Angels, Warrior Angels or Cavalry Knights are excellent for this as they can still reinforce you quickly even if you are deep in enemy territory.

Match up analysis



I might do a faction by faction analysis eventually, but I'll start this off with a few general observations. Factions that have automatic wound mechanics are very dangerous. Also, the same goes for factions that can do assassination combo's on your summoner. He might have eight health, but that can be gone very quickly against some factions.






Second summoner specific cards





Card	Deck	Notes
	Second	He's designed to take some damage, so don't be afraid to take some. Do remember that he isn't affected by his own Shield of Light, so try to avoid exposing him to too many unnecessary hits. Also, try to use Transformation when you can attack something useful with Samuel; it basically turns him into Grognaack for one turn.
	Second (x2)	In most cases you'll want to keep this in hand when you draw it as it can break event combo's the other wants to throw. As you only have two you'll want to use it only against the most powerful enemy events. If there are no useful events to cancel or if your hand is severely clogged, it can be the right move to build this for magic or use it on a lesser event.
	Second (x2)	You are basically paying two magic to prevent all wounds on a common. If that keeps your unit alive for another turn, you are also denying your opponent one magic. In some situations that can be worth it. For instance when assassinating or to keep a key unit out of reach of your units. Don't be afraid to build this one if it's clogging your hand though. Note: This can combo with the woeful brother's ability!





Card	Deck	Notes
	Second (x3)	This one is extremely useful if your summoner is in the fray himself as it both makes him a powerhouse and makes him harder to hit. Or if your units are spread across the board. And it's the only way to give champions the Shield of Light. You can only play one per turn and you have three, so use it.
	Second (x2)	Pretty situational event. If you are not running a lot of woeful brothers build this event. If you are and get this early, still build it as it's not worth having it clog up your hand. In general it is only worth using if you get at least two magic, otherwise build immediately.




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.
	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.

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	Base	-2	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
	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.
	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	

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	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.
	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 than 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.

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	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 Elion). Also useful in defense.
	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.

Card	Deck	SSCF*	Notes
	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.
	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 Vanguards 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)