



Hello! Playing and [reviewing Roguelikes](#) is actually not everything that we do in this blog – I’m also an avid Yu-Gi-Oh player, and I have posted about [my efforts to make a good Labyrinth deck](#) beforehand.

A few weeks have passed since then, including a regional I went to, so how’s that been going?

Table of Contents

- ◆
- [Were GOAT-era cards the solution to 2025 Yu-Gi-Oh?](#)
- [Trap card adjustments](#)
 - [Compulsory Evacuation Device – Cut](#)
 - [Dogmatika Punishment – Added](#)
 - [Phoenix Wing Wind Blast – Cut](#)
 - [Starry Dragon’s Cycle – Testing](#)
 - [The Black Goat Laughs – returning](#)
- [Mixed ratios](#)
 - [Labyrinth Labyrinth – Cut](#)
- [Side and Extra Deck considerations](#)

- [Side Deck Strategy](#)
- [Extra Deck Adjustments](#)
- [Conclusions](#)

Were GOAT-era cards the solution to 2025 Yu-Gi-Oh?

This was the question I was asking myself last time. My reasoning was that **Ryzeal** was highly vulnerable to its Extra Deck monsters being bounced, while **Maliss** was generally weak to removal. Because of this, I leaned toward playing lower-to-the-ground trap cards like **Compulsory Evacuation Device** and **Phoenix Wing Wind Blast**, supported by appropriate discard fodder.

However, I overlooked a few key factors—most notably, the **Fiendsmith** cards. I initially assumed Fiendsmith wouldn't be very popular. Since **Ryzeal** locks you into Rank 4s and **Maliss** locks you into Links, I didn't think Fiendsmith would see widespread play.

I was dead wrong.

Ryzeal Fiendsmith quickly became the most dominant and popular deck of the format. Worse still, it isn't just dumping **Fiendsmith in Paradise** in its regular combo lines—it's creating serious issues for my **Sky Crisis control** setup against Ryzeal. I can't just sit back, deny **Detonator** after a Normal Summon, and call it a day. Now, I actually have to deal with the **Nader** pops. This meant an entirely different set of cards needed to be played—more on that below!

Regarding **Maliss**, I originally thought I could still rely on **Nibiru** and my turn 0 trap cards to beat them going second. However, Maliss players have adapted, learning how to play around **Nibiru** more effectively. While it's still a strong card against Maliss, it's no longer as impactful on its own. One **Dormouse** alone can't deal with it, but one **Dormouse** plus a **Field Spell**? That's another story.

All of this forced me to readjust.

Trap card adjustments

Compulsory Evacuation Device - Cut

I reluctantly decided to cut **Compulsory Evacuation Device**. I actually enjoy running this card since it's a simple yet versatile tool from an older era, capable of bouncing both my opponent's monsters and my own. Unfortunately, I determined that my primary form of removal had to be **Dogmatika Punishment** instead.

Dogmatika Punishment - Added

I previously hesitated to run **Punishment** because **Detonator** can shrug it off, and Maliss can dodge it using their trap cards. However, careful maneuvering can still make this card effective. When it works, its utility is undeniable—it destroys a card and triggers an additional effect depending on what I send to the GY. There are plenty of great GY targets to take advantage of.

Additionally, I chose to run **Punishment** partly because of **Berfomet, the Mythical King of Flying Beasts**, which allows me to Special Summon any **banished** Fiend monster during my opponent's turn. Given how popular **Bystials** are right now, this is crucial for recovering **Lovely Labrynth** if she ever gets banished.

Phoenix Wing Wind Blast - Cut

I also had to cut **Phoenix Wing Wind Blast**—not because it's a bad card, but because I desperately needed the space. Its discard cost made it awkward with my side deck patterns, as I frequently side out **Rollback** and/or **Black Goat Laughs** depending on the matchup.

Instead, I opted for **Paleozoic Marrella**, one of my favorite techs in Labrynth. I played it extensively last year, so I'm already well-versed in how to utilize it effectively. If I find space in my Extra Deck, I might also run **Paleozoic Opabinia**. Another card I strongly considered was **Paleozoic Dinomischus**, which I love for its ability to swarm the board with **Paleos** while also acting as a discard outlet—something I'm currently lacking. But compromises had to be made.

Starry Dragon's Cycle - Testing

You could argue that, instead of **Compulse**, I'm now running **Starry Dragon's Cycle**. This is a tech card I've been experimenting with a lot this format, and I really like it. If I'm allowing my opponent to access the Extra Deck, this card serves as a great punish. It also has a lot of small synergies, though I'm still not entirely convinced that it belongs in the deck. I plan to keep testing it.

The Black Goat Laughs - returning

Lastly, I want to point out that I actually cut **The Black Goat Laughs** for the better part of months, but recently returned it – I am still debating whether I want to run 1 or 2, as it is sometimes very good if you can discard it, but it can be very bad going 2nd without a way to do so.

Mixed ratios

Arianna, the Labrynth Servant - Reduced to 2

You may have noticed that I'm only playing **two** copies of **Arianna, the Labrynth Servant**. This might seem strange since she's one of the deck's best starters, but I had a few reasons for this change:

1. I finally got my hands on **Dominus Impulse**, so I needed three deck slots for it.
2. With **Impulse** in the deck, I started stacking too many **three-ofs**, including **Trick Trick**, **Big Welcome**, **Arias**, **Absolute King Back Jack**, and previously **Arianna**.
3. Running so many **three-ofs** increased my chances of drawing dead duplicates.
4. Arianna conflicts with my **Normal Summon**, and she's vulnerable to hand traps and disruption.

Considering all of this, cutting her to two felt like the best compromise for my deck. It is now not clogging my hand as much in both of duplicates and normal summons, I am being vulnerable to less hand traps, I still see her often enough, and I can play a recurring resource game with my other starters.

Labrynth Labyrinth - Cut

Following the previous logic, I am trying to have as many live cards as possible in my hand right now – and LabLab is usually a brick. It is awkward to play and sometimes feels like a win-more card. Right now I’m experimenting with ways to clear fields without it, and I am doing fine with that! I might play it again in the future, but for now, it’s out.

Side and Extra Deck considerations

I won’t go too deep into my **side and extra deck** today, but here’s a quick overview:

Side Deck Strategy

- I **always** side in at least six cards, usually cutting **Paleozoic Marrella**, **Transaction Rollback** (e.g., **Punishment** when going second vs. Ryzeal or **Ice Dragon’s Prison** against Maliss), as these are primarily defensive cards, and the least effective trap card for that matchup
- Since I have so many **GY effects**, I don’t need backrow protection when going first, making me always fix my deck for going second and very little for going first.
- **Fantastical Dragon Phantazmay** improves my odds of seeing turn 0 plays against Maliss. Unlike **Artifact Lancea** or **Chaos Hunter**, Phantazmay doesn’t lose me card advantage.
- **Droll & Lock Bird and Nibiru, the Primal Being** are **flexible side deck picks against Ryzeal variants, Mermails, and Maliss decks**, which also cover a lot of rogue strategies.
- **Ultimate Slayer** is a near auto-include going second—except against Maliss.
- **Dimension Slice** is my only truly experimental side deck tech—it helps immediately remove **Detonator** after summoning **Sky Crisis**, unless my opponent is running **Solemn** cards.
- **Labrynth Set-Up** is there for **Shifter decks**, though I might drop it since they’re falling out of favor.

Extra Deck Adjustments

- Mostly consists of **Punishment** and **Slayer** targets.

- I have room for **one** Rank 4 utility Xyz (preferably Fiend because of the Welcome Lock). Right now, I'm testing **Dugares**. Since I am stealing level 4 monsters a lot of the time through **Starry Dragon's Cycle**, I wanted to have something that was immediately and generically useful.
- **Cambroraster** is getting cut, but I'm undecided on its replacement.
- **Almiraj** is staying for **Back Jack** setups.

Conclusions

I'm still experimenting with various tech choices and **side deck patterns**, but overall, this deck is **practically guaranteed to win going first** and has solid chances when going second. My side deck is designed to **patch up weaknesses** in specific matchups.

As for how good this build will be after further testing? Time will tell!

What do you think? How do you prefer to play

Labrynth? Let me know in the comments!