

After a few months of waiting, it's finally time for a banlist. Some quick thoughts about the format:

I don't think we're in a *terrible* spot right now, the format is *fine*. **MitsuYummy** is an egregious deck, but other than that I don't think there are any overt overperformers right now. I see **Dracotail** complaints starting to surface, but it's the healthiest top deck we've had in the format in an entire year, or maybe even two years. However, **Dracotail** running away with the format might be a legitimate concern if we curb every other deck too much, so *something* probably needs to be made.

There is also **K9**, which provides some cool play patterns, but also some very frustrating ones, main one being its use as an engine to simply ignore interaction.

Lastly, we should address some cards that are just making general play experience worse, and making well-designed decks feel much worse than they would otherwise be.

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Banned: Herald of the Arc Light



Probably the most obvious card on the chopping block. This is the most important card in making **MitsuYummy** a viable strategy. While I would like to see **Habakiri** specifically go, the chances of that are very low given his now-announced reprint (more on that later).

Herald of the Arc Light sits on this spot where I don't think it's a completely degenerate card nor an unreasonable endboard piece, packing two good effects and a decent amount of counterplay, but the only way it is being used now is to turn good boards into unbreakable ones and to turn a 1 card combo for one deck into a 1 card combo for 2 decks.

Pure **Yummy** doesn't even need this card: its endboard provides good, layered disruptions without it, which is why I think this will be the only significant **Yummy** hit on the list, and the only one that *should* happen.

Banned: Princess Quinquery and Albion the

Sanctifire Dragon



With the ever-increasing trend of Konami seemingly listening to the community and banning pseudoFTK cards, there is a good chance that **Imperial Princess Quinquery** goes too. While I don't think the locks it enables are necessarily that efficient, it does promote a very boring play pattern, and is only ripe for abuse in the future; summoning monsters to your opponent's side of the field is just something that has aged terribly and we will need to remove it from the game.

As for **Sanctifire**, while the chances are lower because of the **Branded** support in **Burst Protocol**, I wouldn't put it at zero. Konami has started doing some bolder changes to the banlist, and it's not like the **Branded** deck needs this card either. It would be good if it finally goes, and I am hoping that it will since it did not get a reprint in the structure deck and it doesn't seem to have any other reprint in sight.

Banned: Maliss White Binder



I don't care anymore, man. **Red Ransom** being banned was not enough in **Master Duel**, where **Maliss** is *still* seeing play, with 1 **Dormouse**, 1 **Underground** and 1 **Chessy Cat**. The **TCG** does have **Link Decoder** and **Splash Mage**, but I don't care anymore, I don't want to risk someone across my table playing this fucking go-fish, feast-or-famine deck that provides 0 interesting gameplay for both sides.

Anything that you want to do to curb consistency or extension for **Maliss** can just get replaced by other cards in the **Cyberse** lineup. Reduce consistency? They get **Cynet Mining**, **Allure of Darkness** or **Small World**; we already tried this with limiting **Dormouse** and semi-limiting **Underground** and **White Rabbit**. Reduce extension? There are billions of generic **Cyberse** monsters that can allow you to play through everything, and unless you kill **March Hare** directly (based) any way to get to her or banish her from the deck would nullify it. We already tried to stop its extension with **Link Decoder** and **Splash Mage**, it didn't work.

Kill endboard pieces? How many do you want to kill? **Allied Code Talker?** **Terahertz?** **Topologic** monsters? And probably many more I can't even think about, notwithstanding that their own in-engine cards can place a pretty decent board that draws them 3 or 4 cards, then 3 potentially 3 more draws on the crackback.

We just need to face that this deck is horribly designed and we need to kill it. In

fact, I am concerned that **White Binder** might be too lenient of a hit, I would happily take **Dormouse**, **March Hare** and **Red Ransom** too just to be safe.

Limited: Habakiri and/or Preparation of Rites, Mitsurugi Prayers



Even if this card is about to get a reprint, I believe it will still see some sort of limitation. Personally, I think **Mitsurugi** is mostly a fine deck, but I hate how this asshole makes every board so much stronger and gives decks so many pushes. I find the lack of locks that this card has a horrible oversight, but it is what it is. Limiting would go a long way for decks to stop playing it as an engine, as the high amount of bricks it needs will make your good-to-bad-draw ratio a lot worse.

But it's not the only way we can go towards this, and indeed I don't think it should be the only one either. I think limiting or even banning **Preparation of Rites** would be a completely reasonable hit, as it further limits how many starters each **Mitsurugi** splash can have and how safe they are from handtraps, making it much less likely that players will be willing to sleeve **Habakiri** in their whatever decks.

Additionally, regardless of how they ago at solving the **Mitsurugi** splashes, limiting some amount of copies of **Mitsurugi Prayers** is also a good idea. I actually think that even semi-limiting this card would make a significant difference, as they

actually *do* go over the 3 copies quite quickly. Even losing 1 **Prayers** would significantly hamper how easy it is to keep triggering your **Mitsurugi** Ritual Monsters and how difficult it is to remove them from the field.

How Do We Hit Dracotail?



I don't want to do a lot to **Dracotail**, as it is a very healthy deck to be at the top. All of its cards have some degree of counterplay, it is good both going 1st and 2nd, doesn't have any absurdly overpowered monster, breakers hurt it but are not totally polarizing, and its gameplay is more about outgrinding your opponent than putting so much disruption that they are unable to play the game.

There is a legitimate concern, however, that **Dracotail** could become too dominant if other decks are reined in too much, without giving anyone else a chance to compete with its raw resource generation. I'm not sure how we should go about it, though—I don't want to hit any of the maindeck Monsters, as they are all well-designed cards that I want to keep in the game. The same goes for the Spells, though there could be a decent argument to be made that limiting one of them would force them to commit more of their recursion into returning the Spells into the deck instead of recovering Banished resources or just random Monster GY.

Another one that comes to mind, then, is limiting **Arthallion** to one or even two

copies. In either number, it would leave **Dracotail** be a completely viable deck, but it would need to be more careful with its resources as it can't infinitely summon **Arthallion** with no setup. I am confident that even 1 copy would be enough, as they can recycle it with its trap cards.

I am not too sure of what route we should take. I personally don't want them to hit **Ketu**, as these are the types of cards we want to see in the game more (good going first, better going second), so I'm gonna go on a limb and say it's gonna be **Arthallion** or **Rahu**.

Could We Ban the Trap Cards Instead?



There way to go towards these decks, which would be capping its endboards through its Trap Cards.

In the case of **Mitsurugi**, banning **Purification** and leaving everything else untouched (given that we solve how to stop decks from just splashing **Habakiri**, of course) would also be a completely reasonable move, as it would severely cut the ceiling as to what decks can do with it and what its own engine can do, while leaving room for its other advantages to shine, such as highly recursive monsters, great generation of advantage and excellent resource loop. It would also eliminate how the GY effect of **Purification** makes the **Mitsurugi** Rituals so hard to interact

with if you even survive their board, despite **Mitsurugi Prayers** already making them pretty hard to interact with on both the GY and the field.

Likewise, banning one of the **Dracotail** traps would reduce the amount of recursion and draws it gets, limiting its ceiling without hitting its consistency. Any of the three Trap Cards would do the job here, but **Dracotail Sting** is the most egregious one, since it gives **Dracotail** a complete new tool that it was otherwise hard for it to access: GY disruption, a very pronounced weakness that it had before it got printed. It is also the hardest one to play around, as anything you do *will* turn it out, unlike **Flame** and especially **Horn** having a lot of built-in counterplay, and it would let **Dracotail** keep its main strengths online.

However, banning 1-ofs, especially banlists, is not usually how Konami does banlists, so I doubt it will happen.

Limited: Liger Dancer



It has happened before that decks can maybe deal with one copy of a card, but trying to deal with 2 is impossible. **Liger Dancer** is precisely in this spot: it's frustrating enough to remove one from the field, but seeing two on the board makes the game essentially unwinnable. I think that 1 **Liger Dancer** is enough to keep **Lunalight** as a meta threat, while still giving opponents enough chances to respond

to it without needing a million outs to unaffected monsters.

Limited: K9 Jokul



Do I think this is the best way to take care of **K9**? No, I'd much rather see **K9 Ripper** go, as it provides the most amount of ignorant gameplay, or kill **Noroi** due to how horrible hand-peaking feels. However, they are getting support soon, and **Ripper** is an integral part of the strategy, so my guess is that they're just gonna curb its consistency and call it a day.

Unbanned: Droll & Lock Bird



This is the new controversial card in the YGO community. Personally, I don't think it's that big of a problem. Of the top decks right now, it's only one of them that completely dies to **Droll—Mitsurugi** and its variants—while the other decks have clean or at least decent answers to it. **Yummy**, for example, can do most of its gameplan under **Droll**, it's virtually a blank card against **Dracotail**, and while **K9** can get hampered a lot, it can also negate it through **Ripper** or just pass on **Ripper + Forced Release** (and even an extra Rank 5 if they hard draw Izuna), which is a very respectable board given your opponent needed to commit a hard minus. It's just not a huge issue for most decks.

Where it *is* becoming an issue, however, is when playing against it going 2nd. It greatly simplifies the decision tree of the player going 1st, as they know that they pretty much only have to deal with whatever is left on the board.

But honestly? I don't think it's that big of a deal. Handtraps do this already when going 1st, and with **Droll** just hurting certain decks specifically, I don't really understand where the hate for this card is coming from, not to mention it doesn't really overperform over other going-1st cards such as **Solemn Strike**. In my opinion it is a completely overhyped card that, as usual, comes and goes from formats, and I *would* like to keep the band-aid on rather than risk a format being completely unplayable because **Droll** is not on the game.

Unbanned: Zombie Vampire



This is a very cool card that is pretty well-designed, as you need to risk giving your opponent advantage to use it, and 2 level 8 monsters are usually not easy to come by.

...Well, at least not without **Habakiri**, but we have (allegedly) already addresses this above.

We already know that we would not be playing **Zombie Vampire** on pure strength alone because it's been much easier to summon him before through **Horus** cards and no one has batted an eye towards it.

Also, it just got announced for a reprint, so it's kind of a moot point; this card is going nowhere.

Unlimited Cards



As for the cards that will be limited, I'm calling **Mirage of Nightmare** as the old-school card that we are getting back. This would shock lots of people, they would try them out, and instantly realize how garbage this card is outside of gimmicky pile decks that somehow are okay with waiting for two entire turns for milling 4 cards.

Premature Burial and **Return from a Different Dimension** would see also zero play. **Premature Burial** is just a gimped version of **Monster Reborn**, which is already not seeing play. Yes, it has Equip support, but realistically no one is going to play **Hidden Armory** or something just to search **Premature Burial**, and we already have **Isolde** banned.

My guess is that it will be **Mirage**, though, since it just got pointed to 0 in Genesys.

Lastly, for some cleanup hits, **Linkuriboh**, **Purrely Sleepy Memory**, **White Dragon Wyverbuster**, **Black Dragon Collapserpent** and **Runick Fountain** are all probably going to come back to 3 and make no impact on the game. **Branded Fusion** is almost certainly coming back to 3 to sell **Burst Protocol**, and maybe the Konami intern will remember to unlimit **Unchained Soul of Sharvara** this time.

As for the **Vanquish Soul** deck, maybe they'll let us have **Razen** back if they take some other piece like **Hollie Sue**, who knows.

Do I Have Any Wishlist hits?



One that I absolutely don't think will happen is banning **Called by the Grave**, although I would be overjoyed if it happened. This is a bullshit card that just gives the W to the player going first, it has no place in the game and should never have been printed. They have limited it in both the **OCG** and **Master Duel**, which gives me hope, but it's still a stupidly ignorant card that only serves to create unwinnable game states and nullify any chance you might have to play going second.

As for where I stand in the floodgate discussion, while I do think that the big three floodgates should probably go (so **There Can Be Only One, Rivalry of the Warlords and Gozen Match**), I am generally less aggressive on floodgates as people tend to be; my issue is always with power level and risk-reward, not necessarily with labeling something as bad automatically just because of the way it influences the game. Still, these were arbitrarily put to 1 with no further notice, so I don't think Konami is going to do anything more about it.

Perhaps the hottest take here (and incoming “**Labrynth** player spotted” retorts), I think we should start talking about removing **Ash Blossom** for the game. For the record, if everyone started with a card that auto-negated the first **Welcome** trap that I tried to resolve, that'd be fine. I have much more of a problem with how **Ash** is being used in the modern days: essentially just extra copies of **Called by the Grave** that sometimes function as actual disruption.

This is because **Ash** can randomly negate many cards that make the player going

2nd try to catch up. Notably, the **Mulcharmies** are the biggest offenders, with it being the most stressing go-fish minigame that one could imagine, but there are tons of random carts that are much worse just because they randomly can get negated by **Ash**. Think cards staple cards like **Phantastical Dragon Phantazmay**, **Book of Eclipse**, and **Songs of the Dominators** or even engine cards like **Rescue-Ace Impulse** and **Absolute King Back Jack** just randomly lose to **Ash** for no reason, which makes playing them always feel pretty bad as you are always at risk of being instantly cut short of trying to play the game.

I know that we are all scared about seeming out-of-touch Yugiboomers that complain about handtraps when we talk about **Ash**, but we can print a replacement or something for it or just accept that there will eventually be more handtraps that can replace it (and in fact we already have a couple with the **Dominus** cards). I just hate seeing good going 2nd cards getting constantly checked by **Ash** when she is a pretty decent card independently of that. The **OCG** seems to start agreeing with me, as they have just semi-limited **Ash Blossom**, so I guess we'll see.

Conclusions

Konami in 2025 has done a much better job at designing decks. All of them have clear weaknesses and strengths, and usually want to play out games instead of shutting out their opponent wholesale. However, they have been too lenient with restrictions, making some combinations of cards too powerful without an adequate trade-off.

With a few more cards gone, and the general trend of deck design going upwards, we are probably headed for a great year of YGO for 2026. Me? I'm going to wait for the banlist to drop to start testing YCS Guadalajara and commit to a deck, though I am probably going to take **Labrynth** again.

What about you? Do you think I missed any cards, or disagree with some of the things I proposed? Let me know down in the comments.