

The Dynamics of Rishadan Port.



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Chapter I – Background

In 1999, the world population surpassed six billion, Internet Explorer version 5 was released, Lance Armstrong won his first Tour de France, the Phantom Menace was out (May we forget) and Australia voters decided to keep the Queen and not become a republic. Most importantly of all, Rishadan Port was printed in the game Magic the Gathering.

Port, as it is traditionally known, has been disrupting opponents' mana bases and strategies for nearly two decades. Once a Port is online, the true value of its flexibility can be realised. It can breakdown opponents tactics, especially against opponents who play multicolour decks or rely on utility lands to win the game.

Firstly, let's break the card down.

Rishadan Port

Type: Land

Effect of card: T: Add 1 to your mana pool.

1, T: Tap target land.

"Rishada is the gateway to free trade—but the key will cost you." Truer words have never been spoken, especially if you look at the price of Rishadan Port on MTGO.

First and foremost, Rishadan Port provides mana denial; tapping down a land in a player's upkeep can keep them off a source of a colour for their turn and your next turn.



While tapping down a land seems innocent enough, Rishadan Port can be one of the biggest nuisances to play against in a game of magic. Ports versatility can give its controller a huge advantage over their opponent by simply disrupting their mana and/or strategy.

Chapter II – Why Play Rishadan Port?

Mana disruption is a key tactic for the overarching strategy in the Legacy decks that utilise Rishadan Port. It is usually used as a playset alongside Wasteland. Death & Taxes is arguably the most known deck to play Rishadan Port along with Legacy Goblins and Lands. Some Lands decks, however, have opted for Ghost Quarter in its place depending on the meta.

Aether Vial synergises very well in decks that play Rishadan Port. Vial allows you to pump out threats (creatures) while aggressively using your mana to port and disrupt your opponent's mana base.

In my opinion, the two main reasons to play Rishadan Port are to gain an advantage through mana denial and strategy denial. The examples I will use throughout this paper will refer to

cards in the Legacy deck **Death & Taxes**. As Rishadan Port has multiple subtleties between different uses, I apologise if I repeat myself.

Let's analyse what mana denial and game plan denial can do to your opponents.

Mana Denial

Legacy is a format that truly rewards players who understand the metagame, specific deck strategies and what cards are going to get your opponent out of a situation.

Being able to figure out what mana colour to tap down each turn to best disrupt the progression of your opponent's gameplay is something you will only gain a better understanding of by playing the format against a variety of decks.

Denying your opponent a mana source or a complete colour can soft lock them out of the game. Knowing what cards that have the potential to swing the game is huge when managing your opponents' resources and choosing which colours to deny.

[Here](#) is a great example of denying your opponent of a colour and limiting their ability to play the spells in their hand.

At 1:00, you can see Charles commit to cutting Eli off black mana, ultimately keeping him from casting his Engineered Plague in hand.

One thing to note in this game is he continues to 'port down' the black mana, sticking with the same strategy and not switching between colours.

Andrew Shrout even states *"He's committed to cutting off black mana, making sure that Eli cannot cast black cards at sorcery speed. I think Charles understands that Engineered Plague is the really spooky card here."*



Another example is when [Marc Konig took out SCG Richmond](#), finishing Joe Lossett by taking him off white in his last turn. At 32:40, you can see Mark play another Rishadan Port to which the commentators say *"Another Port is good; another Port is excellent, this takes away all of Joe's outs"*.

When you combine Rishadan Port with other mana denial cards such as Wasteland or Thalia, Guardian of Thraben, you can very quickly lock your opponent out from casting their spells, ultimately dismantling their game plan.

Strategy Denial

Forcing your opponents hand is a huge advantage when trying to close out a game or win a match. When your opponent is playing a deck that relies on cards such as Thespian's Stage, Academy Ruins or manlands such as Mishra's Factory or Creeping Tarpit, Rishadan Port shines as an answer and threat to their strategy.

With a deck like Death & Taxes, the more you can restrain your opponent from achieving maximum efficiency with their deck whilst applying pressure to take them off their game, the more likely you'll come out victorious. Against a deck like Lands, which as its name gives away, relies on its land base to win the game, Rishadan Port can create various headaches for your opponent when played correctly.

Chapter III – When to activate Rishadan Port

One question you always need to ask yourself is *does porting my opponent further my strategy, or hinder my ability to improve my position?* Tapping down your opponent's resources is great, but you also need to make sure you're developing a board state that is going to win you the game (or at least force your opponent to answer it).

Upkeep & Draw step

You almost always use Rishadan Port during your opponent's upkeep, forcing them to 'use it or lose it' (their land) at instant speed. Your opponent may float mana in response, but their land is still tapped and they're forced to use that mana before their draw step.

One mistake I see too often is a player with multiple Rishadan Ports, tapping down lands at the same time without letting their opponent respond (if they are going to float the mana). If your opponent floats mana from a land you tap in their upkeep, they may want to cast a spell with that mana. If you save your other Port for the next phase (the end of their draw step) and pass priority back to them, they will either have to use the mana floating, or use more lands to play instant speed spells that cost more than one.

Board State Example:

Your opponent untaps with 2 Bayous and a Tropical Island. You target both Bayous in their upkeep, to which they respond with floating GB and using Abrupt Decay on your creature.

What you should have done, is target one Bayou first, then waited to see if the opponent floats any mana. If they do, you can wait and use the second Port at the end of their draw step.

This way, if your opponent still uses Abrupt Decay in their upkeep by using the other Bayou, you can respond by tapping down their Tropical Island.

If they decide to not use the mana in their upkeep, you've successfully used Port and can now port again at the end of their draw step.

Second Main phase & End Step

Port doesn't have to always be used in an opponent's upkeep; the innocence of tapping down a Wasteland or a Thespian Stage in an opponent's end step can force them into untimely activations.

Porting your opponent can also be used to clear the way for your creatures. Say I play a turn 1 Aether Vial, then in turn 2 I have an online Rishadan Port and an Aether Vial on 1. I know my opponent is on UR Delver and I want to get my Mother of Runes online in my next turn.

Instead of tapping down my opponent's mana in their upkeep, I leave it. They play a spell, play a Volcanic Island (assumably to hold off Lightning Bolt, Stifle or Brainstorm) and pass turn. I can now tap down their Volcanic Island at the end of their second main phase, force them to either use it or lose the mana and then safely vial in my Mother of Runes in their end step. This also works with Karakas and legendary creatures such as Thalia; tapping it down and then vialing in the creature to give it 'pseudo haste' for your next turn.

Another reason you may want to tap down your opponent's mana in their second main phase / end step is to cut them off from mana during your next turn. If your opponent plays a second Island and passes the turn, you can tap one down in their turn to cut off their ability to cast a card such as Counterspell in your turn.

During Your Turn

Tapping down your opponent's lands during your turn can also be an option. Using the above example, if you draw a Stoneforge Mystic for the turn and have 4 mana open compared to your opponents 2 Islands, you can tap 1 down at the end of your draw step, then cast the Stoneforge Mystic safely (as they now cannot cast Counterspell).

I've had corner cases where I've targeted an opponent's fetch land in my turn. My opponent has not chosen to sacrifice the fetch and I have followed up with a Wasteland and taken the fetch out. If you play a card like Aven Mindcensor, you can use Port to your advantage by forcing them to make the first move and search their library. If you flash in an Aven Mindcensor, your opponent can respond by fetching, but if you can force them to use the fetchland by targeting it to tap, you can then drop the bird wizard in response.

Rishadan Port also gives decks an alternate turn two play. This can be a great way to keep your opponent off a specific '*sorcery*' speed spell (such as a non-land permanent or an actual sorcery) but still lets you make the most of your mana.

Scared of your opponent dazing your Thalia turn 2? Port them instead, then you can effectively “play around” a card like Daze for the rest of the game noting you hit your land drops.

Chapter IV – Mana Denial Approach

The basics of mana denial are very straight forward. Quickly identify the most important colour in your opponent’s deck and try to keep them from having access to that specific colour. Of course this is less effective if they can play their cards at instant speed in response to you porting their land(s), but that’s always going to be the case.

As I stated before, your ability to utilise Rishadan Port is rewarded through deep knowledge of the format. Knowing what decks need what colours to develop a board state or take advantage of a situation is vital to making the most of your ports.

It’s not just single colours either; what double costed cards should you be worried about? The real issue is also making sure your opponent cannot cast cards that can turn a game in their favour. For instance, you may be put in the situation where you have to make a decision: is it more important to keep an opponent off UU for Jace, the Mind Sculptor, BB for Liliana of the Veil deny them from using their 1 white mana source??

Timing and board state is also important. If you’re playing against a UR deck, you may try and port their red sources in the beginning to get a Mother of Runes online, but later in the game you may be more afraid of your opponent casting Jace, the Mind Sculptor, so you switch to keep them off more than 1 source of blue mana.

One key advantage Rishadan Port has over another mana denial card such as Wasteland is its ability to disrupt your opponent who plays basic lands. In matches where your opponent knows you also run Wasteland, they may opt to play or fetch for basic lands in the opening turns of games 2 and 3. As these cannot be destroyed through Wasteland, Rishadan Port plays a huge role of keeping them off certain colours and tying down their mana early.

Chapter V – Colour Denial Choices [Archetype Breakdown]

During any match, you should always be looking to see what resources your opponent has access to, and which resources you can deny. What creatures and other sorcery speed spells does the deck feature that you can just disable altogether? Attempting to port the colour that your opponent is most likely to need at sorcery speed is a great strategy against a number of decks.

Again, one piece of advice I have (and cannot say enough) is to deny multicolour decks of one colour for as long as possible. Choose a colour and stick to it. . If you’re wasteland’ing Tundra’s, Port down Plains. If you’re destroying Tropical Islands or Bayou’s, port down their basic Forest.

If you come up against decks with mana dorks, porting can be a lot more stressful when trying to keep your opponent off certain colours. Usually I try and figure out which cards have double mana costs and keep them off those cards, rather than a single colour. Here is a simple guide on what mana you should target against specific decks.

NOTE: I have taken lists from MTGGoldfish as my basis for these decisions

Grixis Delver

Double colour costed spells: True-Name Nemesis (UU), Vendilion Clique (UU), Force of Will (UU)

Land / Colour to target: Dual lands

Reasoning: It's harder to take decks off a colour that run Deathrite Shaman, but as you also run Phyrexian Revoker and Swords to Plowshares, you can always try. It depends on your board; if you have an online Mother of Runes, you care less about Lightning Bolt and Fatal Push and more about their creatures and ability to go wide. I like to cut them off B as soon as possible (Cabal Therapy, casting a Deathrite Shaman or Gurmag Angler, and double U for True-Name Nemesis).

UR Delver

Double colour costed spells: Bedlam Reveler (RR), Sulfuric Vortex (RR), Exquisite Firecraft (RR), Force of Will (UU), Vendilion Clique (UU)

Land / Colour to target: Volcanic Island

Reasoning: Pretty straight forward; Volcanic Island gives the deck access to two colours.

BUG Delver

Double colour costed spells: True-Name Nemesis (UU), Vendilion Clique (UU), Jace, the Mind Sculptor (UU), Force of Will (UU), Liliana of the Veil (BB), Tombstalker (BB),

Land / Colour to target: Bayou, Underground Sea

Reasoning: Keeping your opponent off B and G can keep Deathrite Shaman and Tarmogoyf's off the board, as well as denying them access to multiple black sources for Tombstalker or Liliana of the Veil. Much like Grixis Delver, it depends on if you can get your opponent off a colour quickly and still land/protect your creatures.

Note: Against Delver decks, I usually port their land after a Delver trigger has resolved, just for that extra piece of information (If they flip a Forked Bolt, I'll go for their red source, if they flip a Ponder, blue source).

Grixis Control

Double colour costed spells: Jace, the Mind Sculptor (UU), Force of Will (UU), Engineered Explosives

Land / Colour to target: Dual lands, more specifically Underground Sea

Reasoning: Cabal Therapy, Gurmag Angler and Toxic Deluge are all sorcery speed spells that can ruin your day as a Death & Taxes player. Refer to the Grixis Delver matchup for further information.

Four Colour Control

Double colour costed spells: True-Name Nemesis (UU), Vendilion Clique (UU) , Force of Will (UU), Leovold, Emissary of Trest (BGU)

Land / Colour to target: Dual Lands, more importantly Tropical Island

Reasoning: Keeping the deck off double UU is pretty important; also hitting a green source keeps Noble Hierarch at bay and also Deathrite Shaman if you're lucky (if either weren't deployed on turn 1). It can feel like the strategy may underperform when playing Port against decks that play mana producing creatures such as Deathrite Shaman or Noble Hierarch, but by no means insignificant. You are still restraining your opponent on mana, and in time you will find removal and other answers to their creatures.

BUG Control / Shardless BUG

Double colour costed spells: Hymn to Tourach (BB), Liliana of the Veil (BB), Jace, the Mind Sculptor (UU), Force of Will (UU),

Land / Colour to target: Bayou

Reasoning: Just like any other multicolour deck, going after their dual lands and Deathrite Shaman aggressively is key to making the most out of your porting efforts. Keeping them off green will slow their creatures, black will slow their hand disruption and blue will keep their sculpting in check.

Jund

Double colour costed spells: Hymn to Tourach (BB), Liliana of the Veil (BB),

Land / Colour to target: Grove of the Burnwillows, Bayou

Reasoning: Keeping Jund off the Punishing Fire engine is tough, as you also want to target their double black and green sources. Similar to BUG, their threats are mainly green dependant, red shuts down parts of their removal and black also hits removal and hand disruption.

Maverick

Double colour costed spells: None

Land / Colour to target: Green Dual Lands, Karakas, Gaea's Cradle

Reasoning: Maverick can be tough in restricting mana as they run Deathrite Shaman and Knight of the Reliquary. Getting rid of an early Deathrite Shaman and then attacking their green sources can lock them out of casting any threats.

Storm

Double colour costed spells: Tendrils of Agony (BB), Ad Nauseam (BB), Dark Petition (BB),

Land / Colour to target: Underground Sea

Reasoning: Getting a storm player off black (Dark Ritual, Cabal Ritual, hand disruption spells) is a lot more important than blue if you're trying to stall and put together a formidable board state.

Miracles

Double colour costed spells: Counterspell (UU), Jace, the Mind Sculptor (UU), Force of Will (UU), Unexpectedly Absent (WW), Terminus (WW), Council's Judgment (WW), Engineered Explosives

Land / Colour to target: White sources – p preferably Plains.

Reasoning: As Death & Taxes is a creature heavy deck, I like to keep Miracles off white sources for the majority of the game (Swords to Plowshares and Terminus being the main disrupting elements). Hitting Tundra's is fine because it also locks down a blue source to make double UU for Jace a little harder, but if you're wastelanding their Tundra's, porting their Plains is the next best thing. This forces them to 'use it or lose it' when it comes to Swords to Plowshares or Unexpectedly Absent. This may also take them off white altogether before they can miracle a Terminus or sink white mana into an Engineered Explosives. If possible, I like to actively try and tap down their fetchlands to force the search.

Reanimator

Double colour costed spells: Irrelevant

Land / Colour to target: Duals

Reasoning: Reanimator uses blue or red for card filtering, and black for business. You're usually better off attacking the black and stopping cards such as Exhume or Animate Dead.

Death & Taxes

Double colour costed spells: Serra Avenger (WW), Mirran Crusader (WW), Flickerwisp (WW) Sanctum Prelate (WW), Council's Judgment (WW)

Land / Colour to target: Karakas, Plains, Rishadan Port

Reasoning: In the Death & Taxes mirror, being able to play a turn 1 Vial into a turn 2 online Port is huge, especially if your opponent doesn't have the same turn 1 play. Without Vial, targeting your opponents white sources can restrict their ability to cast creatures and force them to use cards such as Swords to Plowshares when they typically wouldn't want to (would rather save it for an offline Mother of Runes, or in response to a creature equipping / attacking with equipment). Tapping their white sources can also force out a Stoneforge ability. Tapping down their Ports in their turn means they cannot Port you off white sources during your turn. Tapping down their Karakas means they can't play combat tricks with their legendary creatures (especially those with first strike), or return yours without having an impact.

Lands

Double colour costed spells: 0

Land / Colour to target: Grove of the Burnwillows, Green sources, Thespian's Stage

Reasoning: The Life from the Loam engine can get out of control if left unrestricted, so controlling a Land's players access to green is huge (but also tough). Tapping down lands such as Wasteland, their own ports or Thespian's Stage can put them in a position where they have used their land's ability, but may have not wanted to.

[Here is a great example](#) of keeping a lands player off G mana; Marc doing his good work from around 44:45 onwards after casting a Cataclysm to 'reset' the board.

Eldrazi

Double colour costed spells: 0

Land / Colour to target: Any (2) mana producing land, Eye of Ugin

Reasoning: Eldrazi can fall apart if their mana base isn't kind; being able to slow them down is key to getting ahead. In the late game, porting down Eye of Ugin can either force them to search, or be open to a Wasteland next turn.



Elves

Double colour costed spells: Natural Order (GG), Craterhoof Behemoth (GGG)

Land / Colour to target: Bayou, Gaea's Cradle

Reasoning: Elves is a tricky one due to their creatures producing so much mana, but also Gaea's Cradle being able to produce a huge amount of mana. Most Elves players will keep their Gaea's Cradle in hand until they are in a position where it will win them the game, or put them at such an advantage where they cannot lose. If you have the chance to tap down a cradle, you're a very lucky person and should do so. Many Elves players will play it safe and play / fetch for basic lands first, yet if a Bayou is in play target it. Abrupt Decay is usually the only black costed spell which you want to keep them off.

Sneak & Show

Double colour costed spells: Force of Will (UU), Wipe Away (UU)

Land / Colour to target: (2) mana producing lands, Volcanic Island

Reasoning: City of Traitors and/or Ancient Tomb are excellent targets in decks that use them, mainly to slow explosive starts. Only needing 1 U or 1 R to cast Show and Tell / Sneak Attack gives them a strong out to a Port soft lock on either colour. If they don't have either sol land, I would target their red sources to try and ease the amount of creatures they can pump out of a Sneak Attack (although if it's already online, they can just respond by floating R mana).

Infect

Double colour costed spells: Force of Will (UU), Viridian Corrupter (GG)

Land / Colour to target: Inkmoth Nexus

Reasoning: Infect can be a tough matchup if they get an explosive start, especially due to their suite of 'free' spells such as Invigorate. Noble Hierarch serves not only as a boost for combat damage, but also a source of mana that cannot be hit with Port. Tropical Island is probably your go to coloured mana producing land to tap down, but Ports are a great 'answer' to Inkmoth Nexus.

Note: that usually on the turn they go in for a lethal swing with Inkmoth, they will give it hexproof in response to you targeting it with Rishadan Port, then pump for the win.

Chapter VI - Strategy Denial Approach

Of course you don't have to always go after your opponent colours with Rishadan Port. You can also go after their utility lands. Many decks such as Standstill and Lands rely on different utility lands to win the game.

Chapter VII – Utility Lands [Archetype Breakdown]

Rishadan Port's flexibility shines against utility lands, which is a nice change of pace compared to pure colour producing lands. Rishadan Port's greatest strength is its ability to force your opponent to grow impatient and 'do something'. Here are some commonly played manlands that Port can help you deal with.

Maze of Ith

The basic move with Maze of Ith is to tap it down pre combat, and then swing in with your creature(s). However Maze of Ith can also give your opponent an advantage due to the way an attacking creature is still 'an attacking creature' after it's dealt damage (all the way till the end of the combat step).

Maverick players may know the trick of attacking with a Knight of the Reliquary, dealing damage and then before the end of the combat step, untapping the Knight so they can use its land searching ability as well. Lands players can do the same trick with Marit Lage if they want to swing in for damage, but also have the token as a blocker. If you are aware of this, you can Port down Maze of Ith before combat damage, forcing your opponent to either removal their creature from combat, or leaving the creature tapped.

Thespian's Stage

Thespian's Stage is a very interesting card: one that can take the form of another land for the low cost of two mana. If your opponent has the Thespian's Stage / Dark Depths combo on board, you can Port down their Stage to force them into making the decision if they want to make the token. You may want to be doing this in your turn if you have a Karakas or Flickerwisp in hand that your opponent doesn't know about.

I had a match where my opponent had the combo out on the board and also a Wasteland in play. I had an online Port and a Wasteland. He made the move to end of turn Wasteland my Wasteland, seemingly to make me target the Dark Depths which he could then copy. I responded by tapping down the Stage; he didn't copy the Dark Depths, and then I was able to Wasteland it.

Karakas

Tapping down a Karakas can be to either protect your creatures, or to stop the protection of your opponents. Being able to tap down a Karakas and then either play a legendary creature in your turn, or Vial one in on their end step can give you a huge advantage as it allows you to connect when your opponent may have thought they had an answer for it (in Karakas). If you're playing Thalia against a deck like Miracles, Aether Vial and Port can work great together to make sure they are never getting the advantage of their own Karakas.

Wasteland

Porting a Wasteland will usually force your opponent to use it; you may want them to get rid of it so you can follow up with playing another non-basic land like Karakas or Cavern of Souls. Many players forget that Wasteland needs to be tapped to activate its ability.

Rishadan Port

Similar to porting Wasteland, tapping down an opponent's Rishadan Port is usually to free up mana for your turn, or to get through with a manland such as Mishra's Factory.

Academy Ruins

Tapping down an Academy Ruins forces the controller to either use it, or think you may have something like a Wasteland looming. If they do use Academy's ability to put an artifact from their graveyard on top of their library, use this situation to test how much they want it. If they have a fetchland on board, try wastelanding it to see if they will give up the artifact to not 'strip-mine' themselves.

Grove of the Burnwillows

The Grove of the Burnwillows / Punishing Fire combo can be game winning against fair creature decks like Death & Taxes. Being able to 'keep them off' the engine until you draw a wasteland to hit the tapped Grove is pretty important to create a board state that is going to get you over the line.

Eye of Ugin

As discussed earlier, Porting down an Eye of Ugin puts the decision in the controller's hands to either use it or maybe lose it to a looming wasteland. In the grindy Eldrazi matches, Eye usually has a big target on it for wasteland, as it can get out of hand if not promptly dealt with. You can also use Port alongside Aven Mindcensor to your advantage, pressuring your opponent to activate it, then responding with the Mindcensor.

Barbarian Ring

Barbarian Ring is one of my most hated cards as it's a great answer for Lands against a Sanctum Prelate on 2. If you play smart, you can tap it down before they get threshold online and then wasteland it away. On a side note, although a Prelate equipped to a Sword of Fire and Ice may seem invincible, a Thespian Stage'd Ring and normal Ring can still combine to deal with it.

Gaea's Cradle

As I said earlier, if you get the chance to port down a Gaea's Cradle, you're a very lucky person. Most elves players will usually hold their cradle until it can either win them the game, or put them at a considerable advantage. Maverick builds do also tend to play a Cradle in their 60 so be cautious.

Manlands

Rishadan Port can also act as a Maze of Ith against manlands such as Creeping Tarpit, Mishra's Factory, Inkmoth Nexus and Mutavault. Yet don't just port the manland in their upkeep, see if they actually want to activate and attack with it first. This way, they've pumped mana into what ultimately turns out to be a fog.

The Tabernacle at Pendrell Vale

I had to put this in here, because it's a mistake I see many new Lands players make. If your opponent untaps with creatures and you have a Tabernacle on board, **do not** use your Ports on their mana until they pay for their creatures. This way, they cannot float and use the mana to pay for their creatures off the land(s) you tap down. This also allows you to make your opponent tap additional lands in their upkeep.

Final Thoughts

Rishadan Port has a lot more to offer than what meets the eye at first glance. It's flexibility to be more than just a mana denial card can help you gain the small advantages over your opponent needed to win the game.

It's a card that rewards you for your knowledge of the format, the deck you're playing against and the cards that will put your opponent back on top.

Douges.