

# Rakdos Pit Dragon – A Magic the Gathering Card Review

Printed in May 2006's Magic the Gathering Dissension set, the Rakdos Pit Dragon doesn't hold a flame to the Dragons printed today. But, at the time, this "build a better dragon" creature was not only playable, but even worthy of competitive action. From 2007 to 2014, this Dragon card saw Top 8 competitive play in *Legacy* Dragon Stompy decks. We'll get to those surprisingly powerful Legacy aggro decks shortly. First, let's look at the Rakdos Pit Dragon himself.

The Pit Dragon has been reprinted several times over the years; these include in the Duel Decks: Jace vs Chandra, the Jace VS Chandra Duel Deck reprint, and most recently in the Ravnica Allegiance Guild Kit for Rakdos (Red/Black). A 4-mana 3/3 dragon, it doesn't even have flying, as many modern Dragons do. You can give it flying for 2 Red mana, and it also has "fire-breathing" meaning you can pay one Red mana to give the Pit Dragon +1/+0 until end of turn for as much Red mana as you have.

On the surface, those abilities don't seem that powerful. But, when you combine those with the Pit Dragon's Hellbent ability, you suddenly have a substantial threat. When you have no cards in hand, Rakdos Pit Dragon gains double strike. Suddenly, you have the very ace creature that Dragon Stompy initially was built around.

[Dragon Stompy](#) was a Mono-Red deck that existed in the Legacy format starting around 2007. The deck used lots of fast mana cards like Ancient Den, City of Traitors, Chrome Mox, and Simian Spirit Guide to fill the board with aggressive creatures. Magus of the Moon shut off nonbasic lands, by turning them all into Mountains, just like the popular enchantment Blood Moon. It also played Chalice of the Void and Trinisphere to hamper opponents. Since this was a deck that was often going to survive with the player having no cards in hand, it lent itself to Hellbent creatures like the Pit Dragon and Gathan Raiders.

The deck remained pretty much the same for the next seven or so years with new creatures slowly finding their way into the deck. Gathan Raiders, Magus of the Moon, Simian Spirit Guide, and Rakdos Pit Dragon remained. Kargan Dragonlord, Lord of Shatterskull Pass, and even Hound of Griselbrands eventually replaced the Arc-Sloggers and Sulfur Elementals. In nescient's Legacy Daily winning [Dragon Stompy deck in 2014](#), there were still two copies of Rakdos Pit Dragon. The deck faded from top play after that point, as it couldn't keep up with the inevitable power creep of creatures over the years. Still, Dragon Stompy had a seven-year run that left its mark on Magic the Gathering competitive history.

Creatures like Rakdos Pit Dragon hearken back to the early days of Magic when powerhouse creatures often needed a bit of effort to maximize their potential. Looking at these 2014 Legacy

deck lists now in the 2020's, it's hard to see how this Rakdos Pit Dragon survived as a key ace creature for so long. But, given enough Red mana, and double strike, this guy could literally finish an opponent in the air all by itself.

Unfortunately, even the Dragon-happy format of [EDH has left Rakdos Pit Dragon mostly in the past](#). There are a few Commanders who will awake him from his long slumber such as Malfegor and Hazoret the Fervent, but these opportunities continue to dwindle with each passing year. After all, Magic the Gathering isn't going to stop printing bigger and badder Dragon creatures; they are the company that owns *Dungeons and Dragons*!

Still, this doesn't mean we can't look back on this four-mana Dragon, which was still a formidable creature for the better part of a decade in Magic's most cutthroat and skill-intensive format. To be honest, many Dragon creatures today probably owe at least a small part of their existence to the extended success of the Pit Dragon of the Rakdos guild of Ravnica.

Long live Rakdos Pit Dragon!