

SIXTEEN-CARD LOCKDOWN DECK

- 1 Chandrasekhar Kurita
- 2 Contract with Northwind Highlanders
- 1 Coordinator Theodore Kurita
- 2 Salvage Strike Crew
- 2 Sentinel STL-3L
- 2 Tracking System Failure
- 4 Field Construction Site
- 2 Think Tank

BUG OUT

Invented by Chris McKittrick in Seattle and played with some success against World Champion Peter Sundholm, the Bug Out deck makes excellent use of free deployments in combination with Mercenary Contracts. Though it isn't a tournament-winning deck, it's very com-

have a chance to crush even tournament-winning decks. Morgan Kell is a pilot who, when his 'Mech attacks alone, cannot be blocked and returns to your hand at the end of the mission. He's a bit pricey at ④⑤L, but he repays his cost the first time his Cyclops hits a deck for 5 damage plus 3 from Contract with Kell Hounds, plus 4 from a pair of Contracts with Northwind Highlanders, plus 3 more from Contract with Gray Death Legion.... It's not inconceivable that Kell could inflict 15 damage during one attack! You can even do it again next turn as long as you commit yourself to paying four resources for Morgan—not a tough decision. (If you're worried about spending resources, replace Morgan and

drop the Hussars and the Cyranos. They'll snicker when they see the first Contract: "Oh, scary. Now your Hussar can do 3 damage and take, what, 3? Big deal." Once you've played your third Contract and a Cyclops or two, the laughter ends. The first time a Hussar fights a big 'Mech and spits it out as shrapnel, your opponents' shocked looks will tell the whole tale. When Morgan starts piloting your 'Mechs past the enemy's defenses, the game is over.

When It Fails. This deck collapses if all your Politics resources are destroyed. Even losing a few Contracts to an attack is much less painful than handing them over to your opponent next turn. Do whatever you have to do; heck, throw away 'Mechs to keep that last Politics from being scrapped.

The Bug Out deck also lacks staying power. You must win early. Those tiny 'Mechs and Vehicles aren't very durable, especially given the recent errata that vehicles are scrapped on a die roll of 5 or 6. The Contracts are scrapped when the 'Mech they're protecting takes 5 or more damage.

Furthermore, if the Bug Out deck ever loses 'Mech advantage, it's in trouble. In many cases, choosing battles carefully can solve this problem, but a swarm deck can sometimes keep Contracts down. Sometimes.

BUG OUT DECK

- 1 Contract with Black Thorns
- 1 Contract with Gray Death Legion
- 1 Contract with Kell Hounds
- 6 Contract with Northwind Highlanders
- 1 Contract with Snord's Irregulars
- 2 Mercenary Commission Contacts
- 1 Mercenary Relations Division
- 1 Morgan Kell
- 6 Outreach Mercenary Training
- 6 Cyclops CP 10-Z
- 6 Cyranos
- 6 Hussar HSR 200-D
- 4 Spider SDR-5V
- 10 Support: Logistics
- 8 Support: Politics

By day a mild-mannered game designer, Wolfgang wields the crushing power of an 80-ton walking tank by night. Our nation's highways are paying the price.

The outcome is now a mathematical certainty—the lock is in.

petitive in casual play—a strange but potent blend of tiny 'Mechs and powerful contracts.

The deck relies on 'Mechs and Vehicles that provide free deployments (Spiders, Hussars, and Cyranos) with Contracts to give a little punch. It also uses the cheap, tough Cyclops CP 10-Z, a 'Mech costing ③②L that can overheat for 5 damage. When the Cyclops attacks and Contracts are in play, no one dares let it through.

How It Succeeds. The Bug Out deck wins by making every battle too costly for your opponent. Since the Contracts can be added to a 'Mech's strength after battle is joined, there's no way of knowing which tiny "bugs" to crush in order to avoid massive damage.

First, hit your opponent early (since your 'Mechs cost little or nothing), giving you room to deploy an extra resource or Contract—possibly on the first turn. Within a turn or so, play the Cyclops and another Contract or two. This basic strategy can defeat most casual decks and a fair number of tournament decks.

You may change your play strategy if Morgan Kell, a unique Command card personality from the basic BattleTech set, shows up in your hand. In this case, you

another card with a couple of Inside Jobs for the same effect at zero cost.) Since most of the 'Mechs and Vehicles are fast, any non-speedy opponent will have to be on guard to stand a chance of blocking your damage. Furthermore, the Cyranos VTOL plays right into your strategy since VTOLs can only be blocked by VTOLs or guarding 'Mechs. Opposing the blocking 'Mechs is no problem as long as you have Morgan and/or Inside Job available.

Fortunately, it's not unusual to see this Morgan Kell scenario thanks to one card: Mercenary Commission Contacts. MCC can be tapped to search your stockpile for any Mercenary card.

Imagine laying down a handful of free-deploy 'Mechs and Vehicles the first turn and putting all but the half-finished Spider into play, then laying out some Contracts and the Cyclops the next turn. You'll quickly be able to whack your opponents every turn for far more damage than they ever suspected a little Hussar could cause. Even better, the Northwind Highlanders restock when scrapped, ready to come back into play with your Mercenary Commission.

Sure, they'll laugh when they see you