# System Dynamics Analysis of the Celtic Guard Archetype in the TCG Environment

## I. Introduction to the Celtic Guard System: A Rogue Engine Analysis

The Celtic Guard archetype, originating from foundational TCG history, currently exists as a collection of minimally supported Warrior monsters whose competitive viability is entirely dependent on integration with generic, high-utility external engines.1 The archetype’s inherent identity is paradoxical, defined by a single, powerful engine card—

*Celtic Guard of Noble Arms* (CGNA)—and its stringent, contradictory activation condition.

### 1.1. Defining the Archetype and Strategic Mandate

The fundamental components of the archetype are highly restricted. The core suite includes the original *Celtic Guardian* (a Level 4 Normal Monster) 2,

*Obnoxious Celtic Guard* (a defensive retrain with battle protection against monsters of 1900 ATK or more) 1, and the modern key card,

*Celtic Guard of Noble Arms*.3

The strategic mandate of the deck pivots entirely on the effects of *Celtic Guard of Noble Arms* (CGNA). CGNA serves three distinct functional roles:

1. **High-ATK Body:** It is a Level 4 Warrior with a respectable 2100 ATK.1
2. **Hand Extender:** Once per turn, it can Special Summon 1 "Celtic Guard" monster from the hand.3
3. **Draw Engine:** When CGNA inflicts battle damage to the opponent, the player draws cards equal to the number of "Celtic Guard" monsters they control.3

The constraint that dictates the entire deck design is CGNA’s restrictive condition: it "Cannot attack while you have any cards in your hand".1 This rule forces players to prioritize mechanisms for immediate hand disposal in order to enable the core Battle Phase strategies.1

### 1.2. Analysis of Functional Objectives

An analysis of CGNA's unique restriction and mandatory draw effect reveals that the archetype's functional objective is rooted in resource *velocity* and *cycling*, rather than resource accumulation. If a player successfully attacks with CGNA while controlling three total Celtic Guards, they draw three cards.3 This instant refilling of the hand immediately reactivates the restriction, prohibiting any further attacks by CGNA unless the drawn cards are instantaneously utilized or discarded.1

This dynamic implies that the optimal output is a rapid **Draw → Dump → Attack → Draw Loop** executed within the Battle Phase. Maintaining this loop necessitates the saturation of the deck with discard outlets, such as the Bamboo Sword spell package or *Type Zero Magic Crusher*, which can instantly convert the drawn resources into subsequent actions or direct damage.4

Furthermore, the secondary utility of CGNA—its ability to Normal Summon itself and Special Summon a second Level 4 "Celtic Guard" from the hand—means the archetype’s true strength lies in its capacity to generate two Level 4 bodies with a single Normal Summon.3 This characteristic transforms the archetype into a highly consistent

**2-body Level 4 starter**, allowing it to feed into generic Rank 4 Xyz or Link-2 summons, most notably *Isolde, Two Tales of the Noble Knights*.1 The internal effects of the Celtic Guards are effectively a staging mechanism to access the power of the generic Warrior toolbox.

## II. Core Components and Interaction Matrix (Node Definitions)

To understand the operational flow of the Celtic Guard system, it is necessary to detail the functions of the archetype’s cards and the essential external support required to initiate the engine.

### 2.1. The Celtic Guard Monster Suite (Internal Nodes)

The small Celtic Guard monster suite provides synergistic materials, primarily serving as Level 4 attributes for Extra Deck plays.

Table: Core Celtic Guard Card Matrix

| **Card Name** | **ATK/DEF** | **Effect Interaction** | **Canvas Node Functionality** | **Source** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Celtic Guardian* | 1400/1200 | None (Normal Monster). | Link/Xyz Material, Rescue Rabbit target, CGNA Special Summon Target. | 2 |
| *Obnoxious Celtic Guard* | 1400/1200 | Cannot be destroyed by battle with a monster of 1900+ ATK. | Defensive material, CGNA Special Summon Target, Level 4 material. | 1 |
| *Celtic Guard of Noble Arms* (CGNA) | 2100/700 | SS 1 "Celtic Guard" from Hand. Draw up to CG count on Battle Damage. Cannot attack with cards in hand. | **Extender Node (H → F)**; **Draw Node (Battle Phase Trigger)**; **Restrictive Condition Node (Hand Check)**. | 3 |

### 2.2. Essential External Warrior Search and Recursion (Input Pathways)

The Celtic Guard engine is incapable of searching itself effectively, making external Warrior support mandatory for consistency.

* ***Reinforcement of the Army (ROTA):*** As a Spell card that searches any Level 4 or lower Warrior monster, ROTA provides guaranteed access to CGNA (Level 4, Warrior).1 This card functions as the most reliable  
  **1-card starter enabler** for the entire strategy.
* ***Heritage of the Chalice (HotC):*** This card specifically searches 1 "Noble Arms" card or 1 Warrior monster that mentions "Noble Arms".5 Crucially, since the target card is named  
  *Celtic Guard of Noble Arms*, HotC becomes a dedicated, 3-of searcher for the core engine piece.5
* ***The Warrior Returning Alive:*** Provides essential Graveyard recursion for Level 4 or lower Warrior monsters. This is critical for recovering a destroyed CGNA, mitigating the deck's primary weakness to spot removal.1

The combined strength of these search mechanisms provides a significant tactical advantage. Because CGNA is accessible via both ROTA (generic Level 4 Warrior search) and HotC (specific Noble Arms-related Warrior search), the deck can operate with an unusually high effective density of searchers (up to 6 copies of the core engine access). This consistent search capability is the factor that elevates the archetype from a pure novelty to a viable rogue strategy, despite the inherent fragility of its Battle Phase loop.7

### 2.3. Isolde as the Primary Conversion Mechanism

The most powerful interaction occurs when the CGNA Special Summon effect is utilized to generate the required materials for *Isolde, Two Tales of the Noble Knights*.1 Isolde serves as the main conversion mechanism, taking two otherwise low-utility Celtic Guard monsters and transforming them into potent setup tools for the competitive Extra Deck.

The sequence (CGNA Normal Summon → CGNA Special Summon → Link Summon Isolde) instantly provides the player with an Isolde search (for a critical Warrior extender like *Heroic Challenger - Thousand Blades*) and the ability to Special Summon another Level 4 Warrior from the Deck.5 This means the internal card effects of CGNA are primarily utilized to satisfy the Link material requirements of Isolde, effectively outsourcing the archetype's functional output to the generic Warrior toolbox.

## III. System Enabler: The Isolde Engine (Pathway Mapping)

*Isolde, Two Tales of the Noble Knights* is the non-negotiable component that bridges the gap between the Celtic Guard Level 4 materials and the strategic endboard.

### 3.1. Isolde's Function and Resource Conversion

Isolde requires 2 Warrior monsters as Link Material.3 A typical starting sequence uses the Normal Summon of CGNA, followed by its effect to Special Summon a second Level 4 Celtic Guard monster from the hand, ensuring the two requisite materials are available.5

1. **Isolde Effect 1 (Search):** Upon Link Summon, Isolde searches any Warrior monster from the Deck to the Hand. This search can retrieve key extenders that sustain the combo line, such as *Fire Flint Lady* or *Heroic Challenger - Thousand Blades*.5
2. **Isolde Effect 2 (Special Summon):** By sending 1 to 4 Equip Spells from the Deck to the Graveyard, Isolde Special Summons a Warrior monster from the Deck whose Level matches the number of spells sent.8 This effect provides a crucial source of deck-thinning and field extension without relying on subsequent Normal Summons.

### 3.2. Essential Equip Spells for Isolde Milling (Defining Dump Targets)

The selection of Equip Spells sent to the Graveyard dictates the path of the combo and the utility of the resulting material.

* ***Divine Sword - Phoenix Blade:*** This card is highly valued because it can be retrieved from the Graveyard by banishing two Warrior monsters.9 If milled by Isolde, it provides materials for future Link/Xyz plays while remaining a recurrable resource in the Graveyard.
* ***Moon Mirror Shield:*** While useful if hard-drawn (providing battle manipulation) 11, when milled, it often serves as a flexible cost to hit specific low-Level targets or, when combined with other Noble Arms spells, reach Level 4.9
* **Controlling Levels:** The player must strategically choose the number of Equip Spells to mill (1 to 4) to control the Level of the Special Summoned Warrior. Milling 4 typically targets a Level 4 extender (like *Heroic Challenger - Thousand Blades*) to immediately set up a Rank 4 Xyz Summon.

### 3.3. Strategic Bifurcation: Combo Conflicts

The integration of the Isolde engine highlights a critical strategic conflict within the Celtic Guard system. The Isolde combo path inherently focuses on **Turn 1 Combo/Stun**, establishing powerful negation or floodgate monsters using the Level 4 materials.1 Conversely, the core Celtic Guard Battle Draw Loop is optimized for

**Turn 2 OTK/Draw Cycling**, requiring a pristine, empty hand during the Battle Phase.1

Because Isolde’s purpose is to generate cards and materials for a Turn 1 board, and CGNA’s Battle Phase effect generates a substantial hand, these two strategic goals are fundamentally contradictory. A player running the Celtic Guard system must commit early in the game to one pathway: either committing resources to the Extra Deck toolbox via Isolde or saving resources (especially draw/discard fodder) for the fragile Battle Phase loop.

## IV. Comprehensive Combo Analysis for AI Canvas Integration

This section provides a detailed, step-by-step sequential analysis of the two primary strategic combos, outlining the state changes necessary for flow-chart generation tools.

### 4.1. Core Combo 1: The Isolde R4nk Toolbox Setup (Turn 1 Strategy)

This path converts a single search card into a defensive Extra Deck monster, bypassing CGNA's unique battle mechanic entirely.

Goal: Establish a Rank 4 Xyz or Link Monster (e.g., *Number 41: Bagooska*) from a single ROTA/HotC starter.

Table: Isolde Engine Setup Flow (CGNA to Generic R4nk Toolbox)

| **Step** | **Current State (Input)** | **Action (Card Used/Effect Triggered)** | **Resulting State (Output)** | **Canvas Node Type** | **Source** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Hand: ROTA. Field: Empty. | Activate *Reinforcement of the Army* (ROTA). | Hand: +1 *Celtic Guard of Noble Arms* (CGNA). | Search/Input | 1 |
| 2 | Hand: CGNA, other cards. | Normal Summon CGNA. | Field: 1 CGNA. (NS Lock Active). | Normal Summon | 3 |
| 3 | Hand: 1 *Celtic Guardian* (CG). Field: 1 CGNA. | CGNA Effect (Once per turn). | Field: 1 CGNA, 1 CG (SS from Hand). | Special Summon/Extender | 3 |
| 4 | Field: 2 Level 4 Warriors. | Link Summon *Isolde, Two Tales of the Noble Knights*. | Field: 1 Isolde (Link-2). GY: CGNA, CG. | Link Summon | 1 |
| 5 | Field: 1 Isolde. | Isolde Effect 1 (Link Material trigger). | Hand: +1 Warrior (e.g., *Heroic Challenger - Thousand Blades* (HCTB)). | Search/Input | 5 |
| 6 | Field: 1 Isolde. Deck: Equip Spells. | Isolde Effect 2 (Mill 4 Equip Spells). | Field: +1 HCTB (Level 4, SS from Deck). | Special Summon/Resource Dump | 9 |
| 7 | Field: Isolde, HCTB (both L4 equivalent bodies). | Overlay HCTB and Isolde (or other L4 body). | Field: 1 Rank 4 Xyz Monster (e.g., *Number 41: Bagooska*). | Xyz Summon/Endboard | 1 |

This Isolde pathway functions as a significant **branching node**. While milling 4 Equip Spells leads directly to the powerful R4nk toolbox, milling a different number allows for access to other specialized materials. For instance, milling 1-3 Equip Spells might be used to summon a Warrior Tuner, enabling a pivot into Synchro plays or further complex Link climbing (e.g., *Cherubini, Ebon Angel of the Burning Abyss*) if other engines are integrated.12 The L4 requirement for HCTB simply represents the most straightforward path to generic Rank 4 defensive plays.

### 4.2. Core Combo 2: The Battle Phase Draw Loop (The Gimmick/OTK Strategy)

This specialized path leverages the archetype’s unique draw engine for resource generation and potential OTK/burn damage, requiring aggressive hand thinning.

Goal: Inflict battle damage repeatedly with CGNA by maintaining an empty hand throughout the Battle Phase.

Table: Battle Phase Draw Loop Flow (The Resource Velocity Gimmick)

| **Step** | **Current State (Input)** | **Action (Card Used/Effect Triggered)** | **Resulting State (Output)** | **Canvas Node Type** | **Source** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Field: 2+ Celtic Guards. Hand: Empty. | Enter Battle Phase. CGNA attacks directly or attacks a weaker monster. | Battle Damage Inflicted. **Condition Met:** CGNA Attack Permitted (Hand Empty Check). | Phase Change/Condition Check | 3 |
| 2 | Damage Step Complete. | CGNA Draw Effect Trigger (Draws cards equal to number of CG monsters, e.g., Draw 3). | Hand: +3 Cards (e.g., 3 Bamboo Spells). | Draw/Resource Generation | 3 |
| 3 | Hand: 3 Cards. Field: 2+ Celtic Guards. | **Critical Hand Disposal Node:** Activate Hand Disposal Card (e.g., *Golden Bamboo Sword* discarding *Cursed Bamboo Sword*, or *Type Zero Magic Crusher*). | Hand: 0 Cards (Hand Empty Condition Met Again). | Resource Consumption/Dump | 4 |
| 4 | Hand: Empty. Field: 2+ Celtic Guards. | CGNA attempts second attack. | **Condition Check:** CGNA Attack Permitted (Hand Empty Check). | Condition Check/Repeat Loop | 3 |
| 5 | Damage Step Complete. | CGNA Draw Effect Trigger (Draws 3 again). | Hand: +3 Cards. | Draw/Resource Generation | 3 |

The extreme vulnerability of this loop lies in the fact that any negation targeting the initial CGNA Normal Summon, or disruption aimed at the critical Hand Disposal Node (Step 3), immediately paralyzes the strategy.1 The deck must devote substantial resources to the Bamboo Sword engine (

*Golden Bamboo Sword, Cursed Bamboo Sword, Foolish Burial Goods*) specifically to enable this highly fragile cycle.4

An alternative usage of the Draw Loop involves leveraging the drawn Spell cards as fodder for *Type Zero Magic Crusher*.4 By discarding the newly drawn Spells, the player can inflict 500 burn damage per card.4 This specialized strategy converts the draw power into a direct damage output, bypassing the need for CGNA's moderate ATK value to achieve an OTK state.4

## V. Endboard Output and Defensive Structure

The Celtic Guard system is purely an engine for generating materials; it possesses no inherent disruption or defensive resources. Consequently, the quality of its endboard is measured by the effectiveness of the generic Extra Deck monsters it can access through the Isolde engine.

### 5.1. Standard Turn 1 Endboard Outputs (R4nk Toolbox)

When operating on the Isolde path, the goal is typically to establish a protective or inhibitory field presence:

* **Primary Stun:** The most common effective output is *Number 41: Bagooska the Terribly Tired Tapir*.1 Since the core Celtic Guard monsters are EARTH Attribute 2,  
  *Missus Radiant* (the Link-2 EARTH Attribute support monster) can also be used as a material, potentially leading to further Link plays. However, Bagooska, placed in Defense Position, prevents the activation of all monster effects of face-up Attack Position monsters on the field, providing crucial negation for the subsequent turn.1
* **Utility Removal:** Other frequent outputs include *Tornado Dragon* or *Knightmare Phoenix* 1, offering Spell/Trap removal capability that the core archetype lacks.
* **High-End Links:** If the deck integrates robust external extenders (e.g., Heroic Challengers or Infernoble Knights), the engine can be pushed toward high-Link monsters like *Mekk-Knight Crusadia Avramax* or other Link-4 generic bosses.1

### 5.2. Optimal Turn 2/OTK Endboard Analysis

The dedicated Turn 2 goal focuses on maximizing battle damage, often relying on the mass summoning of Celtic Guards and their high-velocity draw effect.

* **Damage Potential:** CGNA’s base 2100 ATK is augmented substantially by supportive Warriors like *Ferocious Flame Swordsman*, which grants a 500 ATK boost to all Warriors on the field.5 If a player controls three or four Celtic Guards, each boosted to 2600 ATK, the combined damage output easily achieves an Over-The-Kop (OTK) condition against a board of weak monsters or by attacking directly.5
* **Success Metric:** In the Draw Loop strategy, the success of the endboard is measured not by established negation, but by the net card advantage gained (drawing 4 to 6 cards) and the subsequent disposal of those cards to maintain momentum or transition into defensive hand traps for the opponent’s turn.5

### 5.3. System Vulnerability and Choke Points

The Celtic Guard system is characterized as a "Glass Cannon" due to its overwhelming reliance on unprotected Normal Summons and fragile combo initiators. The entire strategy collapses if the initial Normal Summon of CGNA, or the subsequent Link Summon of Isolde, is negated by common threats such as *Effect Veiler* or *Infinite Impermanence*.1 The lack of intrinsic recovery or protection means that the deck must dedicate significant space to non-engine countermeasures, like

*Called by the Grave*, simply to protect its single essential choke point.5 Furthermore, while

*Obnoxious Celtic Guard* offers battle protection, the deck remains highly vulnerable to modern non-targeting, non-destruction removal effects, emphasizing its status as a highly casual or rogue engine.7

## VI. External Archetype Synergy and Future Proofing

The longevity and viability of the Celtic Guard engine are tied to its effective integration with generic Level 4 Warrior extenders, affirming its role as a Level 4 Warrior Enabler Package (L4-WEP) rather than a self-sufficient archetype.

### 6.1. Heroic Challenger and Link Extenders

The *Heroic Challenger* archetype provides crucial non-Normal Summon field presence, perfectly complementing the Celtic Guard strategy.6

* ***Heroic Challenger - Assault Halberd:*** This Level 4 Warrior can Special Summon itself from the hand when the player controls no monsters and is going second. This ability provides a necessary second body for Isolde access without committing the Normal Summon, maximizing resource efficiency.6
* ***Heroic Challenger - Thousand Blades:*** As a Level 4 Warrior, HCTB is a prime Special Summon target from the Deck via Isolde Effect 2.6 More importantly, its ability to self-resurrect from the Graveyard when a Warrior monster is destroyed by battle or effect (or when discarded for cost) provides essential recycling and further material for Link climbing, effectively extending the combo line through moderate disruption.6
* ***Fire Flint Lady:*** Similar to *Assault Halberd*, this monster can Special Summon itself by discarding a card. This function is beneficial not only for quickly assembling Isolde materials but also for initiating the required hand-emptying maneuvers necessary for CGNA's Battle Phase.5

The extensive need for external engines like Heroic Challengers, the Bamboo Swords, and Isolde demonstrates that the Celtic Guard cards are functionally parasitic. If these external components were removed, the three Celtic Guard monsters would offer almost zero utility.1 The deck is fundamentally a generic Warrior Link/R4nk toolbox that utilizes the niche draw capabilities of the Celtic Guard name as a supplemental resource engine.

### 6.2. Speculative and Community-Driven Synergy

The archetype holds potential for future development due to its shared lore and typing with other iconic DM-era Warrior cards.

* **Noble Knight Lore:** The existence of *Celtic Guard of Noble Arms* reinforces a thematic link to the *Noble Knight* archetype, primarily through the shared use of the "Noble Arms" nomenclature.14 This linkage means that future support could potentially integrate Celtic Guard monsters into the  
  *Noble Arms* Equip Spell framework, perhaps granting them bonuses when equipped, similar to *Artorigus, King of the Noble Knights*.3
* **Thematic Warrior Links:** Community discussion frequently links Celtic Guard with other classic Warriors, such as *Black Luster Soldier* and *Gaia the Fierce Knight*.14 While no direct mechanical synergy exists currently, the potential for retrains that link iconic Level 4 Warrior themes remains a viable path for Konami to enhance the archetype's standalone power.15

## VII. Detailed Table Specification for AI Canvas Flow

The following tables are generated to provide clear, actionable data nodes defining resource states, actions, and outputs, facilitating the direct mapping of the Celtic Guard system onto a flow-chart visualization tool (AI Canvas).

Table: Critical Search & Extender Pathways

| **Input Card** | **Target Card (Output)** | **Condition/Mechanism** | **Canvas Flow Notes** | **Source** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Reinforcement of the Army* (ROTA) | *Celtic Guard of Noble Arms* (CGNA) | Spell Activation, Search L4 Warrior. | Primary Search Node (Deck → Hand). | 1 |
| *Heritage of the Chalice* (HotC) | CGNA | Spell Activation, Search Warrior mentioning "Noble Arms". | Secondary Search Node (High Consistency). | 5 |
| CGNA (on Field) | *Celtic Guardian* (CG) or *Obnoxious Celtic Guard* (OCG) | Monster Effect (Once per turn). | Field Extension Node (Hand → Field). | 3 |
| CGNA (Battle Damage) | Draw N Cards | Mandatory Effect Trigger (CGNA inflicts damage, Hand Empty Check passed). | Resource Generation Node (Draw Loop Start). | 3 |

Table: System Vulnerability Matrix

| **Vulnerability** | **Mechanism of Failure** | **Countermeasure (Generic Support)** | **Significance** | **Source** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Effect Negation (Choke Point) | Stops CGNA's SS or Isolde's effects, preventing field generation. | *Called by the Grave*, *Crossout Designator*. | Mandatory defense for combo initiation. | 1 |
| Non-Targeting/Non-Destroying Removal | Bypasses OCG's battle protection and targeted removal resistance. | Generic floodgates (*Imperial Order*), high-ATK non-targeting bosses (*Avramax*). | Forces reliance on high-power generic tools. | 1 |
| Hand Size Check Violation | If the player retains cards, CGNA cannot attack, halting the Draw Loop. | Bamboo Sword Engine, *Type Zero Magic Crusher*. | Mandatory engine requirement for Battle OTK. | 3 |

## VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis confirms that the Celtic Guard archetype, while possessing a unique and powerful resource cycling effect via *Celtic Guard of Noble Arms*, cannot function independently in a competitive or high-level rogue environment. The architecture of the deck reveals that the primary utility of the Celtic Guard monsters is to serve as highly consistent, single-card starters (CGNA) for the generic Warrior Link and Xyz toolbox (Isolde).

The strategic choice between the Turn 1 control strategy (R4nk Xyz via Isolde) and the Turn 2 Draw Loop OTK (via CGNA Battle Damage) dictates the entire deck build, necessitating a high-density inclusion of contradictory card packages (negation protection versus discard engines).

For successful utilization of the Celtic Guard engine, the following structural conclusions are paramount:

1. **Consistency Through External Search:** The deck’s consistency must be established by maximizing the search capabilities of *Reinforcement of the Army* and *Heritage of the Chalice* to effectively field six copies of CGNA access.
2. **Isolde as the Strategic Hub:** The optimal strategic flow mandates prioritizing the Link Summon of Isolde, converting the Level 4 Celtic Guards into more potent Level 4 extenders and Extra Deck presence.
3. **Vulnerability Management:** Due to the single choke point (CGNA Normal Summon), the deck requires a heavy concentration of non-engine protection cards (e.g., *Called by the Grave*) to ensure the initial play sequence is not negated, thus safeguarding the entire system from collapse.

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