

SETTLING OLD SCORES

by Jervis Johnson (Hubris Rakarth), Phil Scott (Jordell Freshbreeze)
and Jake Thornton (Jim & Bob)

Jim: *Good afternoon sports fans. You've joined us just in time for the kick-off of what promises to be a very exciting and bloody match. It's a capacity crowd here at the Willowhaven stadium, and with sunny skies and clear visibility nobody should miss any of those gruesome fouls we've come to expect from Hubris and the Nightmares.*

Bob: *That's right, Jim. Nothing but bodies to obscure our view today.*

Jim: *And with this line-up we can expect some body count! Hubris and Jordell have something of a 'history' between them, both on pitch and off. Looks like some debts are going to be paid today.*

Bob: *That's what we're all hoping...*

JERVIS' INTRO

I approached this match with some (justified!) trepidation. It's one of the truisms of game design that a designer can't win his own games. Rick Priestley usually loses when he plays Warmaster. Alessio Cavatore used to be an Italian Warhammer Tournament Champion until he started working as a member of the Warhammer Design team, and now can't win a game of Warhammer to save his life. The only exception I know to this universal truth is Andy Chambers, who seems to have the rare ability to design games and army lists and actually win with them too. I, on the other hand, have an appalling win/loss record with my own games, and especially so with Blood Bowl.

So, when we decided to run a Blood Bowl match report featuring Jordell Freshbreeze and Hubris Rakarth, we decided that the best man to run the Wood Elves would be

- 1 Ithaca Benoin – Thrower
- 4 Eli Dwarfmalice – Lineman
- 7 Helon Sate – Lineman
- 10 Lithium Belledon – Lineman

- 2 Venom of Praetta – Witch Elf
- 5 Hubris Rakarth – Blitzler
- 8 Rancour Kool II – Lineman
- 11 Odium Khan III – Lineman

- 3 Autavic Helledon II – Witch Elf
- 6 Hawthord Tullaris – Lineman
- 9 Elijah Doom – Lineman
- 12 Jeremih Dastard – Lineman



Phil as he's won our last league with a Wood Elves team. I, however, did my best to squirm out of having to play the match. "Choose Jake," I said cravenly, "he's the lead developer for Blood Bowl now!". Unfortunately the guys pointed out that we really needed someone with a bit of experience of running a Dark Elves team, and I had let slip that I'd run one in the very first playtest league we ran for the (what were then) new Blood Bowl rules. "But that was over ten years ago" I snivelled. But it was no good, I was going to have to take on the best Blood Bowl coach from our Head Office league, and I was going to have to do it in print!

As there was no getting out of it, I set about working out a team roster. We'd decided to play a match using standard 1,000,000 gold piece teams, and then I would get Hubris for free, and Phil would get Jordell. Now, I'm a bit of a pack-rat when it comes to the computer work I do, and so stored away on GW's main server is a folder called "Jervis's Brilliant Work". Less I be called egotistical, I should explain that the folder used to be known simply as "Jervis's Old Stuff", until a Studio wag who shall remain nameless decided to rename it "Jervis's Old Rubbish". I responded by renaming it "Jervis's Brilliant Work", and so it has remained ever since.

But I digress. In this folder is all kinds of old stuff, dating all the way back to 1993 when we were working on the Blood Bowl rulebook. A quick search amongst this material revealed my old Dark Elves team roster. The roster represented the team at the end of the first 'season' of

playtesting, and so had more than 1,000,000 gps worth of players. It also included a Cold One 'big guy' Star Player called Razorfang, who was dropped later in playtesting on the basis... well on the basis that a Cold One playing Blood Bowl was a rather silly idea really! Anyway, it was the work of only a few minutes to update the roster, and with that, after a break of ten years, the Nightmares were back!

PHIL'S INTRO

A chance to use my Wood Elves in a match report? How could I possibly refuse? I knew I would have the services of Jordell Freshbreeze as well as the basic team which I chose, and with this in mind I decided to invest in an 11-man team, with a larger number of positional players than I would normally take. In a one-off game, the combination of skills that positional players bring to the team can often make the difference between winning and losing, and it means that you can save those valuable team re-rolls for when they're really needed.

The only other tricky decision I made was the choice between a second re-roll and an Apothecary for the team. Normally, I never take to the field without the services of an Apothecary, but because this was a one-off game, I decided a second re-roll was more useful.

My plan for the game would be to stay away from Jervis' team as much as possible. This would give my more mobile players a chance to move the ball, and hopefully leave the Dark Elves standing flat-footed with no one to block. All very well in theory, but we'll see...

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Unithralas Elvorion – Thrower | 2 Jordell Freshbreeze – Wardancer | 3 Thrilmariand Eluldur – Wardancer |
| 4 Mebrind Sénduil – Catcher | 5 Delorfing Galyrl – Catcher | 6 Tiniorion Deliolas – Lineman |
| 7 Urélad Elrebrindir – Lineman | 8 Rónd Deléldur – Lineman | 9 Urorfiriand Calorfiwyn – Lineman |
| 10 Mywyn Thradriembor – Lineman | 11 Fyndir Amyl – Lineman | 12 Uneril Elvend – Lineman |





RANGERS LEAD THE WAY

Jim: *The stars of each team are in the centre with the referee for today's match: Grimly Shortstaffer, and it looks like the Nightmares have won the toss. Yes, Grimly's signalling that the Nightmares have elected to kick.*

Bob: *I expect this isn't the only kicking we'll be seeing from them, Jim.*

Jim: *Absolutely, Bob. And that's just one of the reasons so many of their fans have travelled to be with us today...*

Bob: *... and there's the whistle! The Nightmares kick off and the ball soars deep into the Rangers' half. It's a good kick, and Unithralas Elvorion has to move quickly to scoop up the ball. Jordell's on the move too, knocking down Elijah Doom as he punches his way through the Nightmares' line.*

Jim: *And he's not the only one. On the other end of the line Mywyn and Fyndir barge back Rancour and Avtavic, leaving themselves and Urorfiriand unmarked. Unithralas back-pedals towards his own line with the ball, not taking any chances, and Urorfiriand Calorfiwyn makes his move too, running along behind the Rangers' line. He's going for the gap that Jordell made, but the Nightmares have seen him. He's tripped... he stumbles... he's down... and the Nightmares are in control!*

Bob: *Well they're not going to leave Jordell Freshbreeze open like that, and there they go: Elijah's up again and he's not happy. Looks like he's making for Jordell. Venom's on her way too...*

Jim: *... this could hurt, Bob.*

Bob: *But there's that famous sidestep, and all Venom contacts is thin air. The Witch Elf makes another lunge and she misses again. Look at Jordell go!*

Jim: *And look at the Nightmares go too! Avtavic and Eli are both in then open and bearing down on Unithralas. Looks like he'd better find some space himself soon or he's going to be a nasty stain on the pitch...*

Bob: *They're not there yet though, and these Rangers are fast.*

Jim: *Fast enough to escape so far, Bob. There's a bit of a scuffle on the line of scrimmage, but even Hubris doesn't look like he can break through.*

Bob: *Nor can the Rangers who look to be throwing a few punches of their own in there and though Odium's down it's all just buying their thrower some time.*

Jim: *And there he goes now! Unithralas shimmies past the incoming Nightmares and passes the ball to Mebrind Senduil. It's a good throw and a better catch. Now Mebrind's off and running, past the scattered Dark Elves and hands it off to Jordell. There's only one player left who can stop Freshbreeze scoring and he's too slow! Jordell dodges out of reach of Ithaca and runs straight into the Nightmares' end zone. It's a touchdown!*

Bob: *And just listen to that crowd, Jim. A touchdown already and we're barely a quarter of the way through the first half. It's going to be an exciting game.*

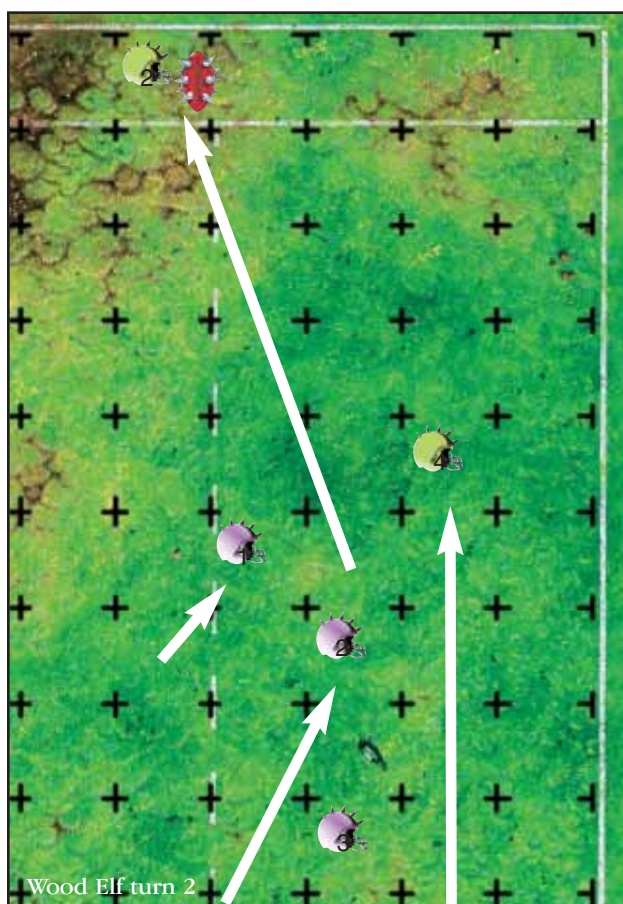
A GOOD KICK(ING)

Jim: *The Nightmares look like they're out for blood now. They've set up almost the whole team on the line of scrimmage and they're raring to go. The few Rangers in front of them look decidedly nervous about the next few minutes. I hope they're being paid danger money.*

Bob: *You need to be alive to spend it though, and I'm not sure that's in the Nightmares' plans. Still, Mebrind will be alright for a bit. In an effort to save his catcher some hospital time, the Rangers' coach has substituted Unithralas Elvorior for him.*

A few seconds from the kick-off and Jordell is already on Ithaca!





And there's referee Shortstaffer signalling for the kick-off... and there we go. It's another loooooong kick, almost to the Nightmares' end zone...

Jim: But look at the Nightmares' line, it's storming forwards. They're all over the Rangers! Avtavic's smashed past Urorfiriand and it looks like he's down for the count, but she's not stopping to check and she's off down the wide zone on the Nightmares' right. There are fists flying everywhere in the centre and it looks like Hubris has KO'd Delorfining Galy! as well. Rond Delendur is down too, and it looks like he's badly hurt.

Bob: There's nothing left of the Rangers' front line, and the Nightmares pour through the hole to mark all of the Wood Elves that are still standing.

Jim: Meanwhile, Ithaca's picked up the ball and he's heading back to where he started the drive in the centre of his own half. He must feel safe behind that wall of Nightmares, Bob.

Bob: Yes indeed, and with three players off in a few moments it looks like the boot's in the other face now.

Jim: But it's not over by a long shot, and it looks like

Lithium's slipped on some of the blood in the melee. He's down, but he's OK.

Bob: That's an opening for the Rangers though, and look at them move to grab it! Two of them are off to mark Avtavic so she can't get up to any more mischief while the rest dodge away from the Nightmares marking them.

Jim: Not all of them, Bob. Jordell's off on his own, and just look at him go! He's slipped his marker, dodged another and he leaps over Hubris!

Bob: And he's not finished yet. He's slipped away from Hubris too and blitzed Ithaca! They both go down in a tumble of limbs and the ball bounces free!

Jim: Looks like they're both uninjured, but Jordell wasn't alone and Delorfining's followed him through the gap. He's almost tagged by Hubris who's sticking to him like his shadow, but it can't last. He ducks and dodges his way past and picks up the ball! The crowd goes wild!

Bob: And there's almost no one left between Delorfining Galy! and the Nightmares' end zone.

Jim: Don't let that fool you, Bob, they're already closing in.

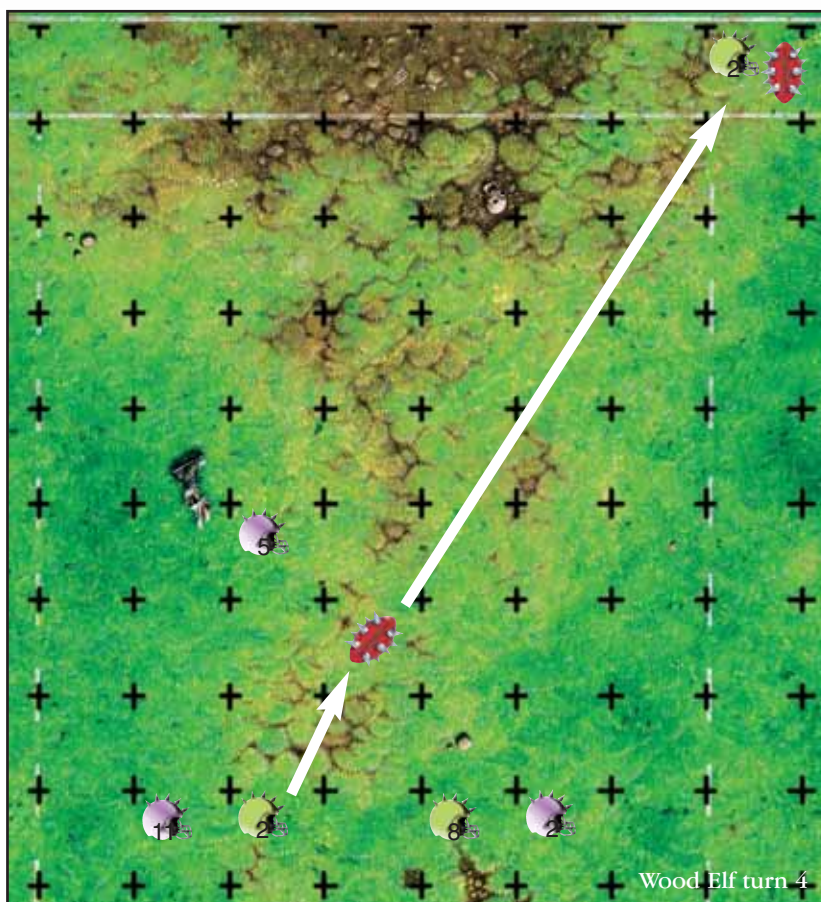
Bob: Looks like most of the Rangers are marked again. Avtavic's not going to stay marked herself though and she smashes into the lightly armoured Unithralas, leaving him in a daze on the ground, and opening herself up for a potential throw...

Jim: If they can get the ball, that is. There are several Nightmares on the case, but it looks like Hubris'll be delivering the blow. He steams in, gaze fixed on the unfortunate Delorfining and in a bone-crunching collision throws the Rangers' catcher to the ground. The ball's loose, but it's just out of Hubris' reach.

Bob: And that's all Jordell's going to need. He leaps onto the ball and scoops it up. I can see the fury on Hubris' face as Jordell dances away from him, tantalisingly out of reach, straight into the Nightmares' end zone for a touchdown!

Jim: Just listen to that crowd, Bob. That's the kind of excitement they're here for.

Bob: Could be, Jim, but there's also the body count, and it looks like we have another. The Rangers are gathered round Delorfining Galy! who doesn't look like he'll be playing any more Blood Bowl today. That was some tackle from Hubris.



Bob: *I don't envy those Rangers linemen on the line of scrimmage. The rest of their team-mates are deployed deep and the Nightmares have only one player not on the front line.*

Jim: *You can almost hear them thinking "feet, don't fail me now!".*

Bob: *And the Nightmares exude confidence. Looks like they reckon their time has come. There's some last-minute plotting between the Nightmares, and there's the whistle!*

Jim: *It looks like the Nightmares are all over the Rangers now, as they pile forward. Venom's off down the Nightmares' right, with support to mark the nearest Rangers. The centre is trading blows with the Rangers, but it looks pretty even.*

Bob: *Ithaca's got the ball and is snuggling into the main line of scrimmage, looks like the makings of a box in there, Jim.*

Jim: *But look at Hubris! He's off and running with a whole wing of the Nightmares. Looks like he's going straight for Jordell.*

THAT'S GOTTA HURT

Jim: *Well it looks like the Rangers' healers have their work cut out for them.*

Hubris floors Delorfing but the ball scatters too close to Jordell...



Bob: *Certainly is. Jordell's not worried though, and he steps neatly out of the way of the thundering charge of Nightmares. Not a scratch!*

Jim: *Now he's off downfield, dodging past the opposition like they aren't there. He's going straight for Ithaca.*

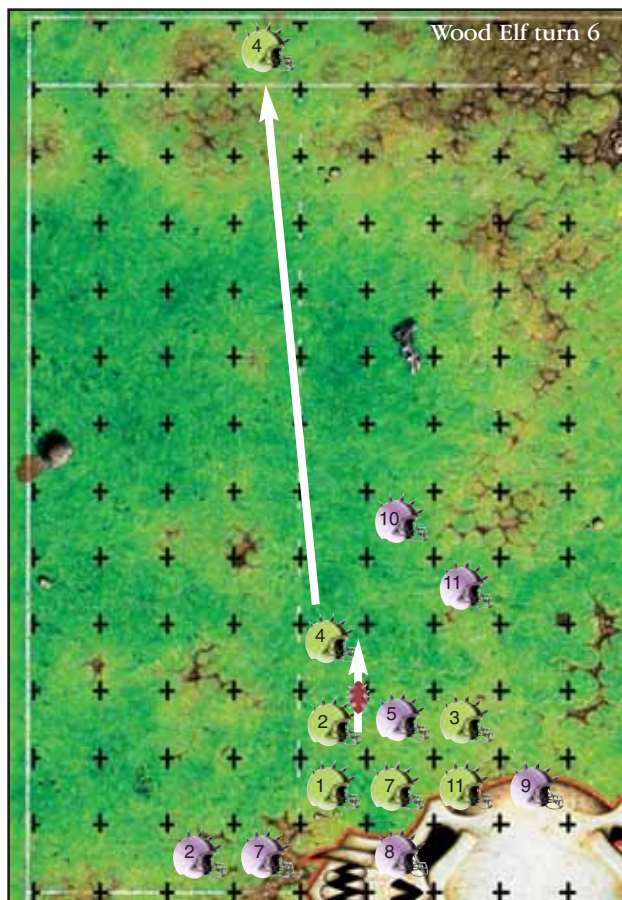
Bob: *And he's got support. Thrilmariand's snuck in to threaten Ithaca already and here comes the blitzing Jordell... he's running up and*

...and we all know what he'll do with it!

Bob: *Certainly does. I'm getting reports here that they're only going to be able to field eight players for the next drive, and we're only half way through the first half! The Nightmares have really put the hurt on them.*

Jim: *Looks like you're right, Bob. There's only eight Rangers setting up. This'll be bloody.*





leaps over Elijah Doom who can only stand and watch. Jordell almost lands on Ithaca and the full force of his charge smacks into the unfortunate Dark Elf. Ouch! That's gotta hurt!

Jim: Ithaca's down and the ball's loose. Rancour almost has it, but he's too slow and it bobbles to the ground. Jordell's faster and shows just why he's a star, pulling out all the stops to make that extra yard and grab the ball.

Bob: That changes everything. The Rangers are leaving the Nightmares where they stand, and are forming up in a box around Jordell. The Dark Elves have been caught flat-footed and most of them are in the wrong half!

Jim: Well they're pulling back already, but it's going to need something special to pull this one out of the fire. Hubris leads the charge back and breaks into the Rangers' protective box, blitzing Jordell, but all he can do is push him back.

Bob: Rancour tries to make up for missing the ball a moment ago and pulls out an amazing turn of speed to get between Jordell and the end zone. Disaster! He's tripped and he's down! That looks bad. I'm sure knees aren't supposed to bend that way, even on Dark Elves...

Jim: And there's the handoff, Thrilmariand's pushed Hubris back to make room for Jordell, but the Rangers' star isn't taking his hat-trick just yet. He hands it off to Mebrind Senduil who runs the ball in for a touchdown! It's 3-0 to the Rangers, and the Nightmares' fans aren't happy at all.

Bob: Lucky they're in separate stands this year, Jim. After what happened last time...

Jim: And to rub salt into that wound, I've just heard that Ithaca's died in the dugout. Apparently that last block from Jordell was just too much.

Bob: Well that'll be one angry set of Nightmares, Jim. You can see by their expressions as they set up for what has to be the last kick off of the half.

Jim: And both sides are in an almost exact copy of the line-ups they used for the last kick-off. We can only





assume that the Nightmares have a new plan, 'cos the last one certainly didn't work.

Bob: *Well here they go, and with Ithaca dead it's Odium Khan who secures the ball for the Nightmares, taking it wide on their left. The line of scrimmage erupts into a scrum and Hubris, with a couple of other Nightmares, makes a break straight for Jordell. Looks like it's payback time!*

Jim: *That scrimmage scramble's turning bloody, looks like one of the Rangers has been stomped good and proper. That's the revenge for Ithaca. There's a couple of others down, but they're just a bit stunned by the looks of them.*

Bob: *Hubris crosses the ground between them and charges into Jordell. Again the Wood Elf steps aside at the last moment and the fabled breaker of heads fails to damage his arch foe. And to think that these two can play for the same teams!*

Jim: *Wouldn't like to try coaching that lot.*

Bob: *It's clearly getting personal down there, Jim. Jordell's actually fighting back and blocking Hubris. Doesn't seem to have any effect, but that's just a sideline. The Rangers' main push is against Odium, the ball carrier.*

Jim: *As you'd expect from such a well-trained team, Bob. Focussing on the ball. And they do work well, Thrilmariand setting up the marking and Ureland rushing in for the blitz...*

Bob: *Odium's still up! He's a little shaken, but looks OK. A little desperate though, I think he wasn't expecting the Rangers to be jumping down his throat quite so soon.*

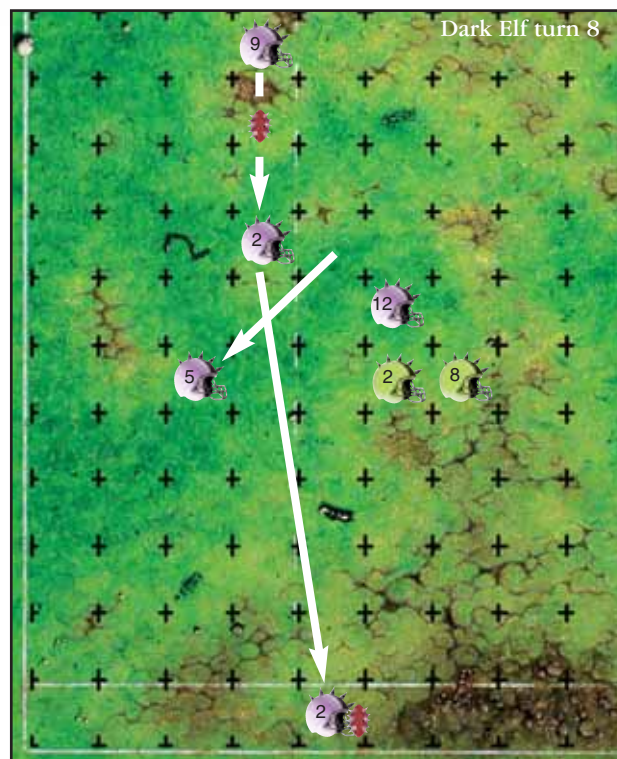
Jim: *He's got some support though with Eli and Lithium coming back to help. And there they go, barging the Rangers aside and making some space for Odium. But what's he going to do with it?*

Bob: *He's running across the back of the Nightmares' line, and it looks like he's going for a pass. Yes, Elijah's waiting for it and there it goes...*

Jim: *...and goes, and goes. Nowhere near him!*

Bob: *Can the Rangers score again? There goes Delorfin, dodging away from his marker, but he's fallen! Ouch! That looks nasty. Was he tripped?*

Jim: *I don't think the Nightmares are going to wait for a decision there. They're off again, and it looks like they're*



making a space down their right wing. Jeremiah floors Unithralas and Hubris tackles Mebrind by the throat... the crowd love it!

Bob: *Elijah's in the clear. He runs across and picks up the ball, dashes through the gap on the right and passes it to Venom. Complete! And she's got nobody to stop her running it into the Rangers' end zone. Touchdown!*

Jim: *And that's the whistle for half time too. We'll be back after this brief word from our sponsors...*

HALF TIME

Jervis: Well, that was a painful first half. I hadn't realised just how rusty I was playing with my Dark Elves, and it took me most of the half just to remember the best way to set them up and use them. More importantly, I had forgotten just how incredibly fast a Wood Elves team can be. With Jordell added to the roster, they have the ability to grab the ball almost anywhere on the field, and then run off and score a touchdown.

Fortunately I did remember just how fragile Wood Elves are, and a full half of sustained pounding by the Nightmares is starting to pay dividends. In the second half things can only get worse for Phil's team, and I'm pretty confident I can turn things around, just as long as I hang on to the ball when I get it!

So, my prediction is that, with a bit of luck, the Nightmares will win 4-3 in overtime. Now all I have to do is go out there and not make any stupid mistakes...



SECOND HALF

Jim: Welcome back to the 2nd half of this exciting match. It's 3-1 to the Rangers and they're just about to kick off... and there it goes... waaaaay out of bounds. Touchback!

Bob: And that puts the Dark Elves firmly in control. They've got ten players on the pitch to the Rangers' seven, and a touchback. Surely they can score from here.

Jim: Looks like Odium Khan's taking the ball. With only three Rangers on the line of scrimmage he's completely unmarked. And there's the whistle again...

Bob: The Nightmares swarm forwards, Lithium and Jeremiab moving up to protect Odium as he makes a rush down the Nightmares' left wing. The Rangers' scrimmage line is overwhelmed and two of them are down, Hubris emerging from the tangle to move up behind Odium. It's a strong start for the Nightmares.

Jim: Certainly is, but the Rangers aren't finished yet. They're on the move, marking the key Nightmares and they look like they're going for Odium.

Bob: Yes, there goes Jordell, straight at Odium Khan. With Unithralas distracting Lithium, Jordell clocks Odium hard, knocking him down and the ball loose! It bounces free and Jordell leaps after it...

Jim: ...and he's down! Jordell's down! I can't see quite what happened there, but what started as a leap ended in a crumpled pile. That's not what they wanted at all.

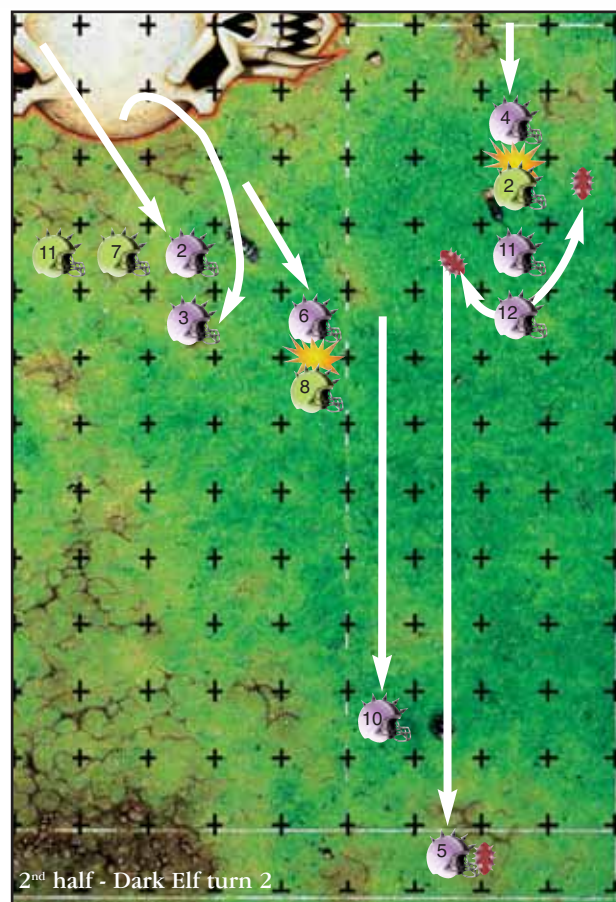
Bob: Not at all Jim, though the Nightmares look like the sabretooth that got the cream.

Jim: Jordell's not getting up, it looks like he's rather stunned by everything, and there's Eli Dwarfmalice. I don't think he's going over to help him up. Ouch! Where was the ref, Bob?

Bob: He's watching Jeremiah, Jim. And you should be too. He's picked up the ball and handed it off to Hubris...

Jim: ...and the rest of the team are backing him up. They're moving to clear a path for Hubris with Venom, Avtavic, Helon and Elijah forming a blocking line to keep his run clear. Lithium looks like he's going to smash aside any last resistance. Yes, there goes the blitz, barging Unithralas aside and rushing downfield in case Hubris needs any help.

Bob: But that's not needed and Hubris runs straight past the fallen Rangers for a touchdown! 3-2 and the Nightmares look to be very much back in the game.



Jim: But what about Jordell? He's still down but he is moving. Looks like he'll be OK for the next drive.

Bob: Which the Nightmares are trying to hurry along. They're on a roll and want to keep up the momentum. But wait a minute, there's something going on in the crowd. Uh-oh, they've got Grimly, the referee!

Jim: Seems like that kicking Jordell took has given them an idea. I think the Nightmares' fans want more of that from their team, and that's not going to happen with Grimly watching them like a hawk.

Bob: Ritual sacrifice is a bit harsh though, Jim.

Jim: Tough sport, Bob.

Bob: True, true... at least it isn't holding up the game. Both teams are ready and it looks like the Rangers have managed to revive Delorling to bolster their numbers. Can the Nightmares keep up the pressure and pull even? This could be the more important drive of the match.

Jim: It could indeed, Bob, and with everything to play for on both sides, it's a slightly nervous kick from the Nightmares which goes wide. It's a touchback for the Rangers, which goes to Unithralas Elvorior, their thrower.

TEXTBOOK STUFF

Bob: And here we go, *Unitbralas* making the safety play, moving back towards his own end zone. The *Nightmares* fans in the crowd start singing "You'll Never Walk Again".

Jim: Well they've got to catch the *Rangers* first, and it won't be easy. Even with a heavy line of scrimmage the *Wood Elves* are rushing through the line all over. They're setting up receivers and there are loads of them.

Bob: *Thrilmariand*, *Mywyn*, *Uneril* and *Jordell* are all through, dodging past the *Nightmares* like they weren't there and spreading out in a textbook formation of four receivers. Any of them could take the pass and run a touchdown. I doubt the *Nightmares* can mark them all.

Jim: Well they're certainly giving it a good go. They know they've been outmanoeuvred and they're trying to cover those receivers. *Lithium*, *Oidium* and *Eli* take one of them apiece whilst *Jordell* is bracketed by *Hubris* and *Hawthord*. It's not perfect, but they're all covered.

Bob: Not everyone's on marking duties though. *Elijah's* doing his best to kick *Unitbralas* when he's down, though it looks like *Delorfing's* managed to fend him off. Slippery customers, these *Rangers*.

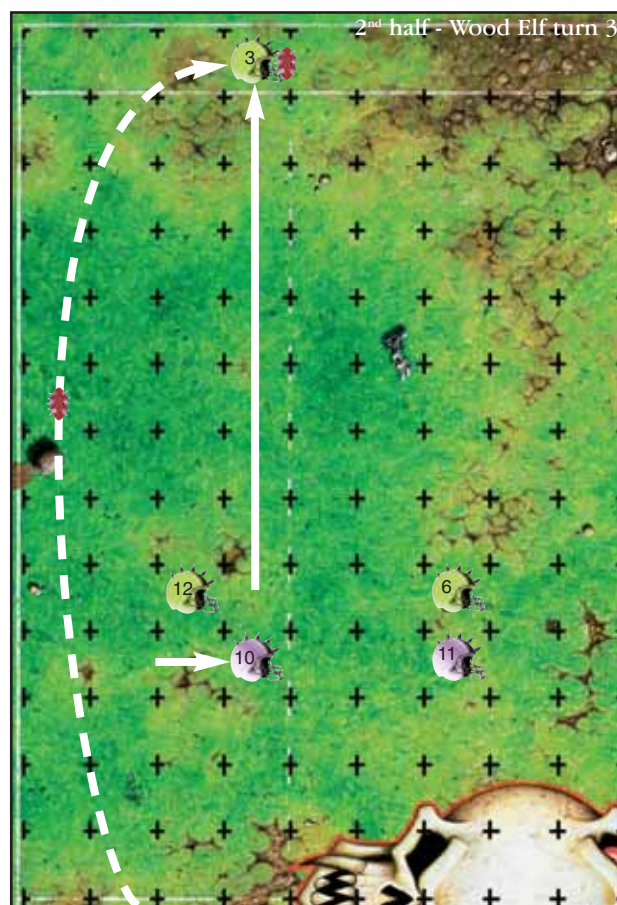
Jim: Sure are, *Bob*. And *Unitbralas* has got to hope that tradition continues 'cos *Venom* and *Avtavic* are closing fast. If they have their way there won't be a pass for those *Rangers* to receive!

Bob: And the crowd's started on "There's Gonna Be A Fatal Accident". Makes you feel all warm and fuzzy.

Jim: It looks like the fatal accident might be to a *Nightmare* as *Unitbralas* decides he's had enough and blitzes *Elijah*. The *Nightmare's* made of sterner stuff and is pushed back, but still standing. At the back *Unitbralas* makes his move, dodging past the charging *Witch Elves* and running forward for a short pass to *Delorfing*. It's complete, and the *Rangers* are on a roll.

Bob: The *Rangers* fans are on their feet now, cheering on their team. *Delorfing* dodges round the *Nightmares*, banding off to *Thrilmariand*. He bobbles the ball, and the fans hold their breath... but he's caught it on his second try and he's only got to dodge one more *Nightmare* and he's free... And there he goes... *Thrilmariand Eluldur* scores! It's 4-2 to the *Rangers* and the crowd goes berserk!

Jim: What a game! Six touchdowns and still a quarter of the game left to play. It's certainly been a match to remember so far.



DESPERATE MEASURES

Bob: And it's a familiar set up on both sides, with all bar one of the ten *Nightmares* on the line of scrimmage. Both sides are looking a bit tired now, and even grimmer than usual: hard for the *Nightmares*, but easy for the *Rangers*.

Jim: Here we go. It's a good kick, picked up by *Eli* who stays safely at the back. Looks like the *Nightmares* are going to copy the *Rangers'* last ploy. They're holding the centre while their *Witch Elves* run down the wings.

Bob: That's right. *Venom's* going down the *Nightmares'* left and *Avtavic's* on the right. They've both got space. All they need is a pass, but I think the *Rangers* will object.

Jim: Absolutely. In fact, they're going on the offensive! The *Rangers* are beating up the *Nightmares*! *Unitbralas* smashes *Jeremiah* to the ground and he's not getting up. Even *Hubris* is down, but it looks like he's not hurt. The *Nightmares'* line is a mess! *Delorfing* is through the gap and he's after *Eli*. And here comes *Unitbralas* with one thing on his mind...

Bob: ... and he crashes into *Eli*, both of them going down in a tangle of limbs. The ball is loose, but only for a second as *Delorfing* snatches it out of the air.

Jim: *I'd say it was going the Rangers' way, but it looks like Unithralas knocked himself out in that tackle. Still, it's the ball that counts and the Rangers have possession.*

Bob: *And the Nightmares' coach has his head in his hands. No, wait, that's not his head... I think it belongs to one of the assistant coaches....*

Jim: *Back on the field Hubris is also losing his cool. He leaps to his feet and blitzes the unfortunate Delorfing and, with the help of Hawthord, takes him down. The Nightmares look to be set on taking the ball back too. The Witch Elves are still waiting downfield in the open, and Elijah goes in to grab the ball... uh oh! It's slipped out of his hands and one of the Rangers is closing in...*

Bob: *It's Ureland Elrebrindir, and he's on a roll. He dodges away from his marker, round another and sprints like a madman for the ball, snatching it up from under the nose of the pack of Nightmares. And he's still going! He's digging deep and risking himself, but he's made it in and away with the ball. Not very far though, and that's a very cross Hubris just a few yards away...*

Jim: *Sure is, Bob. But take a look at the other end of the field. Just a moment ago both Venom and Avtavic were in the open, now they're both double marked. Going to be hard for them to get into space now. This is all much scrappier than we've been seeing, but still some great play out there. It's a real fluid game.*

Bob: *It sure is, and we're about to see some more fluids. Eli and Elijah have got it in for Ureland Elrebrindir, and sure enough, Elijah's tackle brings him down. It's a messy one though, and they're both on the floor. The ball's loose again and for the moment there's nobody to pick it up.*

Jim: *Looks like they're more interested in breaking some beads as Thrilmariand and Unithralas barge and batter Avtavic off the field and into the waiting crowd...*

Bob: *I don't think she's going to be playing for a few weeks after that beating. They may be Wood Elves, but the Rangers' fans are Blood Bowlers through and through.*

Jim: *Sure are, and they love to help out their team when they can. That leaves only Venom lurking near the Rangers' end zone. Wait, Jordell's got something to say about that... kerrunch! Down she goes. I think she's OK though, just messed up the perm.*

Bob: *At the other end of the pitch Delorfing has learned his lesson and doesn't touch the ball. Instead he shimmies past the Nightmares and heads for their end zone. Looks like he's waiting for a pass.*

Jim: *And here it comes. Ureland picks himself up and dodges away from the surrounding Dark Elves, picks up the ball and passes to the waiting Delorfing. Fumble... and the ball's loose again. Seems like nobody can hold on to it now.*

Bob: *We'll see if the Nightmares fare any better this time 'cos it looks like they're setting up something else. Venom's on her feet again and she's dodged out and into the Rangers' end zone. We've now got a player waiting in each end zone.*

Jim: *Hubris and Eli take down Ureland Elrebrindir. Don't think they want him trying anything else clever. They're bringing Elijah back too, just in case.*

Bob: *And here comes the play itself. Hawthord runs in to pick up the ball, then hands it off to Odium. Odium looks like he's making space for a throw and he can see Venom in the end zone. His arm goes back, it's a... fumble!*

Jim: *Looks like Helon's going to take out the Nightmares' frustration on Unithralas, and that's... gotta hurt. Lots. Just as well their fans got rid of the ref earlier...*

Bob: *The Rangers are lucky it's almost full time 'cos they're running out of players! Still time for a bit more carnage though...*

Jim: *Absolutely, and here it is. Odium's too near the ball for comfort so Thrilmariand knocks him out of the way. That leaves Jordell free to pick up the ball and take it to Unithralas for the throw into the end zone... but Unithralas can't keep hold of it. He bobbles the hand off from Jordell and though Jordell manages to catch it again himself that's the end of their plans for now.*

Bob: *Tiniorion and Ureland look like they're heading for safety as they scatter to the corners. I think they're just trying to survive the dying moments of the match, and can you blame them?*

Jim: *I think it's Jordell the Nightmares want, and I'm not sure it's because he has the ball...*

Bob: *They're certainly ganging up on him now, with Lithium holding him whilst Hawthord smashes him to the ground. Once again the ball bounces free only to be picked up by Venom! Helon's run past and is waiting in the end zone. All she needs to do is pass. It won't win the game, but it'll salvage some honour.*

Jim: *That it will, if it makes it... which it doesn't. The Nightmares' fans groan in disappointment as the ball falls just short of the Rangers' end zone. So close, but yet*

so far. And with seconds left to go it looks like the Rangers are going for one final play themselves..

Bob: *Ureland's back in the Nightmares' end zone, waiting to receive, and Thrilmariand's off to collect the ball for a pass. He dodges out, stumbles and then gets away from his marker, squeezes past a second and then can't pick up the ball as the final whistle blows! Rangers win! And there'll be picnics in the old woods tonight!*

Jim: *Certainly will. And some severe lashings in the Nightmares' dungeons.*

Bob: *Well, they do that when they win too.*

Jim: *I expect we'll be seeing a rematch as soon as the injuries have healed. These two still have unfinished business, which promises some more great Blood Bowl. I look forward to more of the same refined mixture of elegant play and mindless carnage next time.*

Bob: *Wait a moment, Jim, I just thought. The Nightmares' fans sacrificed Grimly the ref. Who blew the final whistle?*

Jim: *That's one of Nuffle's great mysteries, Bob, and I'm afraid we're out of time. Until next time, sports fans, may Nuffle bless your balls.*

JERVIS' LAMENT

Curses – I was robbed! Well, not really. The final score was a very fair representation of the relative skills of the two head coaches. However, with a bit more practise I reckon that I could give Phil a much tighter match.

Looking back, the second half started off really well, and I did feel that I was in with a good chance after I scored my touchdown. However, Phil bounced right back, and even with almost half his players in the dug-out, he quickly scored another touchdown. Then I went and let him get the ball off me again, and even though I was able to grab it back, I just couldn't get into a scoring position. Nonetheless it was a very exciting half, and even though I didn't score, I felt I was in with a shot right until the final turn. We'll be starting a new Head Office league soon, and I think I may bring the Nightmares back from retirement properly when we do. A rematch under league conditions would be great fun!

The other thing the match showed up was just what a difference the combination of skills and characteristics can have on the usefulness of a Star Player. Jordell was far and away the man of the match, while Hubris, who has the same cost, had very little impact. This is because the cost of a Star Player is based on a simple formula that only takes into account the characteristics and number of skills

a player has, but doesn't really account for the synergy that exists between these things. As it was, Jordell's characteristics and skills complement each other perfectly, and work together as a package really well. Hubris' characteristics and skills worked together rather less well, and it was difficult to bring all of them into play at the same time. Anyway, based on experience in this match I decided to slightly modify Hubris's characteristics and skills, and also to slightly up the cost of Jordell, and so the Star Player Cards printed elsewhere in this issue of Fanatic magazine use the updated values rather than the ones we used for our match. However, even with the updated values I would still have lost the match. But then, as the game's designer, I've kinda got used to that!

PHIL'S FAREWELL

Phew! I think the phrase "It's a game of two halves" tells it all! After an awesome display from Jordell in the first half, I ought to have had the game in the bag, but Jervis' last turn touchdown, combined with the casualties I suffered, made for a tense second half, dominated by Jervis. He was unlucky not to score at least once more.

The game was a classic Dark Elves versus Wood Elves encounter, dominated by the passing game, combined with a healthy dose of violence from the Dark Elves.

Jordell Freshbreeze lived up to his Star Player tag admirably, and dominated the game, running rings around the Dark Elves. In the end it was his touchdowns that sealed my victory.

My decision to choose positional players over linemen backfired somewhat, and with only seven players on the pitch at the start of the second half, I was always going to struggle. With hindsight, Jervis was bound to try and exploit my lower armour by trying to turn the game into a brawl, and an extra player or two might have served me better than the expensive alternatives. Other than that, I think my plan was sound, and my extra mobility gave me the crucial advantage I needed to edge out Jervis' team.

Jervis was a great opponent, and he pushed me all the way, sticking to his task despite being 3-0 down within 6 turns, and with a little bit more luck with his Armour rolls in the second half, it could have been a very different result. I played to my strengths, and kept out of trouble as much as Jervis allowed me to, although my dead and injured box would seem to suggest otherwise!

So, overall, it was another good day for the Greenwood Rangers. After their success in the recent BBB league here at GW head office it's 27 games unbeaten and counting!

I'll see you all at this year's Blood Bowl.