

BLOOD BOWL®

SPIKE!

THE FANTASY FOOTBALL JOURNAL

ISSUE
03

COVER YOUR MOUTH!
THE PUSTULENT PLAYERS OF NURGLE
TAKE TO THE PITCH!

PAPA NURGLE'S FAVOURITES!
THE SORE-COVERED STARS OF THE
PLAQUE FATHER!

ISSUE THREE!

EVEN MORE OFFICIAL CONTENT FOR THE GAME OF FANTASY FOOTBALL

GREETINGS SPORTS FANS!

Welcome to the festering pages of *Spike! Journal* – now with 117% more rancid Nurgle goodness! Join us as we peel back the scabby secrets surrounding the most pestilent teams in Blood Bowl to get to the pus-filled truth beneath. But be warned, however, excessive exposure can lead to weeping sores, hacking coughs and spontaneous Nurgling infestations.

In this issue, we hold our noses and plunge headlong into Nurgle's putrid contribution to the game of Blood Bowl. Like an aggressive hedge, Nurgle teams have been running rampant over the Blood Bowl leagues, their dripping thorns and suppurating roots getting into stadiums from the Old World to the New! Of all the Chaos gods, Grandfather Nurgle has arguably had the greatest effect on the game, much to the consternation of his brothers. Even old Nuffle has had to cede some of his room at the table to the Plague Father, possibly just for fear of catching something nasty!

Among the jovial and disease-riddled Nurgle teams are countless old favourites – such as the Bile-City Blightkings, and of course, how can we talk of the Pestilent Lord's chosen without mentioning Nurgle's Rotters – the Fly Lord's own! In this pox-covered issue of *Spike!*, we get into the reeking meat of what these teams are all about, dissecting their plays, players, histories and profiles like never before.

And what exposé of the teams of Nurgle would be complete without a look at those Star Players so blessed by the Pestilent Lord's gifts? Read about Bilerot Vomitflesh, the

defensive Lineman with a niggling itch to scratch, and fan favourite Guffle Pusmaw, a player with a real gut for the game. Alongside these well-known legends are new stars, like Tolly Glocklinger, whose tolling bells have heralded doom for many an opponent!

In addition to the rundown on these greats, you'll find all of our regular features – Chat with the Rat, where the Scribbler gives us the lowdown on the Garden of Nurgle's lasting effects on pitches graced by the Pestilent Lord's players. Mindy Piewhistle dishes up the Dirt from the Dugout about some rather questionable policies on towel sharing. As ever, we have another collection of amusing pitch fatalities in Coffin Corner for us all to have a chuckle at, and as a final treat, we take a closer look at some fan-favourite tournaments from around the world. And be sure not to miss this issue's *Mighty Blow!*, drawn by 'Pustulent' Pete Knifton and penned by 'Necrotic' Nick Kyme!

So, dear reader, there you have it. You should now feel free to prune your way through the tangled pages of this issue at your leisure – just watch what you touch and be sure to wash your hands afterwards!



**Glug Glottington,
Guest Editor *Spike! Magazine***

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PAPA NURGLE'S FAVOURED PLAYERS

As mama used to tell you, scratching will only make it worse, and all of the scratching around we've been doing recently, looking for gossip and uncovering dark secrets, has certainly left us eager for more! This month, *Spike! Journal* is scratching a persistent itch, one that's quite inflamed and beginning to ooze, if we're honest. We're taking a close (but not too close) look at the jolliest of the Chaos gods. We'll be examining the teams that take to the gridiron to share his strange benevolence with their opponents, their fans, and even unsuspecting officials, whether they want it shared with them or not!

That's right, readers, cover your mouth when you cough and take care who you shake hands with, because this month, it's all about Grandpa Nurgle!



TEAM SPOTLIGHT

As revealed previously within the pages of your favourite sports periodical, the followers of Chaos have been at the cutting edge (sometimes quite literally) of Blood Bowl since the earliest days of the modern game. Whilst yesteryear the Chosen teams that invaded the ranks of the NAF were conglomerations of the followers and champions of the Chaos pantheon as a whole, it didn't take long for more specialised teams to appear. As the various gods have forgotten their common purpose of showing their upstart cousin Nuffle what they are made of, they have begun squabbling amongst themselves in a return to the behaviour that once threatened to destroy the world. But where in the past warring armies of the gods would clash, today their followers form teams dedicated to their worship, the better to bring the glory of the gods to the gridiron and settle their differences in a modern and civilised fashion (who writes this nonsense? – Ed).

Teams dedicated to Nurgle were among the first to appear alongside the more cosmopolitan Chaos Chosen teams playing in the Northern Wastes, and even before such Chosen teams had made their way south, the original

Nurgle's Rotters emerged within the Empire alongside the Renegade Chaos All-Stars, paving the way for the Chosen teams to come. This should be no surprise, for Grandpa Nurgle has reasons aplenty to be

drawn to Nuffle's sacred game. Nurgle is a generous god, and his blessings are readily shared amongst the mortal races of the world, and the many virulent poxes, contagions and infections he gifts us with every year are readily spread at Blood Bowl stadiums. Be it the often unpleasant locker rooms, where old socks and discarded jerseys lie forgotten and festering in corners, or the crowded stands full of enthusiastic fans, packed together tightly and breathing the same foetid air, game day is a fine time to catch something unpleasant!

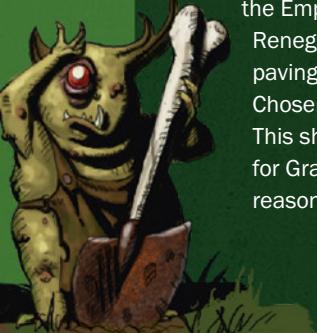
But there's more to it than that, a deeper reason that attracts Nurgle to the game of Blood Bowl, and one that in turn attracts many followers to him. Nurgle is a god of life. In the midst of death and disease, Grandpa Nurgle delights in the proliferation of wondrous creation! Be it the tiniest of microbial bacteria or the smallest of maggotty worms, Nurgle delights to see such life thrive. As his followers are struck down by disease and laid low by contagion, they rejoice in their conditions, gifted a morbid sense of humour by their dark patron, and granted a strange immunity to the horror of their conditions. This joy in life, and refusal to succumb to morbidity, grants Nurgle and his followers a great sense of enjoyment and freedom from the misery of existence; they thrive in adversity and delight in calamity. It is hardly surprising then that the followers of Nurgle would find much to celebrate on the Blood Bowl pitch, where fortune is fleeting and disaster only a feverish fumble away...

BLOATERS

The most favoured of the mortal followers of Nurgle, Bloaters take their name from the fact that Nurgle's chosen tend to be quite large chaps! Obese and unhealthy looking, swollen with disease, their foul bellies are distended further by the noxious gases that bubble up from deep within their corrupted guts. Such favoured champions of Nurgle are neither quick on their feet nor agile, but they make superb players nonetheless! Their immense strength allows them to easily crush all but the hardest of opponents, whilst their corrupted forms scare away all but the bravest. On top of this, Bloaters are walking (waddling – Ed) repositories of Nurgle's most prolific and virulent contagions, gifts they are only too ready to share with others, spreading their patron's benevolence far and wide.

PESTIGORS

Beastmen are the purest children of Chaos, blessed by the Chaos gods, though largely ignored in favour of other races. They take many bizarre forms, most appearing distinctly goat-like. They normally worship the Chaos gods as a pantheon, though there are many who dedicate themselves to a single deity. This is rarely a conscious choice for a Beastman, particularly so in the case of the Pestigor of Nurgle. Beastmen live lives of squalor; they are dirty creatures, notorious for living in their own filth, and so it is no wonder that disease runs rampant amongst their tribes. Whilst normal Beastmen are an unwelcome enough sight in the stadiums of the world, this is doubly true of Pestigors, the most blessed of which can clear an entire stand with their stench alone, should the wind change mid-match!



ROTTERS

Those humans who find themselves infected by Nurgle's beneficence will often turn to him in the hope of finding respite. Unfortunately, the respite Nurgle offers is not always what might have been hoped for! Nurgle blesses his faithful with a certain blindness to their plight, an ability to ignore their terrible ailments and to find joy in their condition. As their bodies fail, as they become more bloated and corpulent, the followers of Nurgle become ever more jovial. In the world of Blood Bowl, many players are infected following a fixture against a team of Nurgle followers, and it is not uncommon for them in turn to leave their own teams behind them, signing up with another Nurgle team as Rotters. In time, the most able players may be further blessed. But for the vast majority, their career is destined to end in a messy tackle, a fate they often find disturbingly amusing!

ROTPAWN

Nurgle is ever-generous with his gifts, bestowing them upon his followers with reckless abandon. But there is a fine line between beneficent gift and unwanted attribute – where claws, spikes and tentacles may be welcomed as benefits to a player's ability, vestigial heads and other random mutations can be nothing short of a nuisance, requiring further alterations to an already tortured kit. If a player receives too many gifts, or is granted them too quickly, their body may be warped too far and their mind affected, causing their form to constantly twist and writhe with new mutations and leaving their sanity shattered. Rotspawn of Nurgle are such cursed champions. They can no longer understand a game plan and need careful handling, but they are kept around for the strength they bring and the disruption they cause.

FAMOUS NURGLE TEAMS

THE DISEASED DESTROYERS:

The Destroyers have the distinction of being one of the earliest Nurgle teams to appear in the NAF, but they have been hampered by an especially virulent strain of Nurgle's Rot. This unique malady has resulted in many promising players mutating into mindless masses of mutation extremely quickly as, delighted with their contagion, Grandfather Nurgle lavishes them with further gifts and mutations. It is not uncommon for all of the players on a Destroyers squad to end up this way before a season is halfway through, which can make fielding a full team of competent players difficult! This has resulted in them being forever in the market for new signings. Fortunately for them, the same ailment that limits development is also highly contagious, and provides a steady stream of fresh recruits as former opposition players present themselves asking if they can perhaps sign with them for a few games after being quickly dropped by their previous team!

BILE-CITY BLIGHTKINGS:

Hailing from the northern province of Ostermark, the Blightkings formed after a virulent plague broke out, rumoured to have been brought to the city by a travelling minstrel. The population was decimated, causing the city to be shunned for several seasons by neighbours and travelling teams alike. After several years of seclusion, the ruling burgomeister and owner of the local Blood Bowl team was approached by a shadowy figure who announced himself as Fester Pusdregz. Once a celebrated coach, Pusdregz had been disgraced by a doping scandal and was hoping to rebuild his ruined reputation, seeing the remnants of this shunned city and its forgotten team as the perfect opportunity to do just that. In just over a year, he had taken a motley crew of freakish and diseased mutants and moulded them into a Blood Bowl powerhouse that continues to grow in popularity and success.

THE SUBTERRANEAN

SLIMEBALLS: This team came together at the height of the Rotters' early popularity, and for many years was seen as a cheap attempt to cash in on the better-known team's success. However, they soon revealed themselves to arguably be the better team, often using actual tactical plays and scoring touchdowns! Wherever they go, their small but loyal fanbase follows, cheering each time their current team mascot/star Bloater Big Grotsy devours a player, or wannabe Thrower 'Sickly' Stefan pitches the ball upfield, a sight sure to amuse as his team-mates rush (waddle! – Ed) forwards and vainly attempt to make the catch.

THE PLAGUEBEARERS:

A relatively new Nurgle team on the circuit which, despite being regularly mistaken for the infamous Nurgle's Rotters due to similarities in kit, the Plaguebearers have recently started to gain a reputation and following of their own. This surge in notoriety has been helped in no small part by the antics of the Plaguebearers' cheerleading squad and their accompanying circus of performers and entertainers, who have created an exciting half-time routine involving the squad members, a very large cloud of flies and a home-made idol of Nurgle.

All of this combines to generate a huge, if sickly, following amongst the crowds present!

TEAM ROSTER

QTY	POSITION	COST (GP)	MA	ST	AG	AV	SKILLS	NORMAL	DOUBLE
0-16	Rotter	40,000	5	3	3	8	Decay, Nurgle's Rot	GM	ASP
0-4	Pestigor	80,000	6	3	3	8	Horns, Nurgle's Rot, Regeneration	GSM	AP
0-4	Bloater	110,000	4	4	2	9	Disturbing Presence, Foul Appearance, Nurgle's Rot, Regeneration	GSM	AP
0-1	Rotspawn	140,000	4	5	1	9	Disturbing Presence, Foul Appearance, Loner, Mighty Blow, Nurgle's Rot, Really Stupid, Regeneration, Tentacles	S	GAMP
0-8	Re-roll counters: 70,000 gold pieces each								

STAR PLAYER REFERENCE



NAME	PLAYS FOR	SKILLS	COST (GP)	MA	ST	AG	AV
Bilerot Vomitflesh	Chaos Chosen, Nurgle	Dirty Player, Disturbing Presence, Foul Appearance, Loner	180,000	4	5	2	9
Bulla Shardhorn	Nurgle	Block, Extra Arms, Foul Appearance, Horns, Loner, Nurgle's Rot, Regeneration, Stab, Two Heads	230,000	6	3	3	8
Grashnak Blackhoof	Chaos Chosen, Chaos Dwarf, Nurgle	Frenzy, Horns, Loner, Mighty Blow, Thick Skull	310,000	6	6	2	8
Guffle Pusmaw	Chaos Chosen, Chaos Renegades, Nurgle	Foul Appearance, Loner, Monstrous Mouth, Nurgle's Rot	210,000	5	3	4	9
Lewdgrip Whiparm	Chaos Chosen, Chaos Renegades, Nurgle	Dodge, Loner, Pass, Strong Arm, Sure Hands, Tentacles	160,000	6	3	3	9
Lord Borak the Despoiler	Chaos Chosen, Nurgle	Block, Dirty Player, Loner, Mighty Blow	300,000	5	5	3	9
Max Spleenripper	Chaos Chosen, Nurgle	Chainsaw, Loner, Secret Weapon	130,000	5	4	3	8
Morg 'n' Thorg	Any except Tomb Kings, Necromantic Horror and Shambling Undead	Block, Loner, Mighty Blow, Thick Skull, Throw Team-mate	430,000	6	6	3	10
Tolly Glocklinger	Nurgle	Ball & Chain, Disturbing Presence, Foul Appearance, Loner, No Hands, Nurgle's Rot, Secret Weapon, Stand Firm	110,000	3	7	2	9
Withergrasp Doubledrool	Chaos Chosen, Chaos Renegades, Nurgle	Loner, Prehensile Tail, Tackle, Tentacles, Two Heads, Wrestle	170,000	6	3	3	8

COFFIN CORNER

In Coffin Corner we remember those players that are no longer with us – because they were trampled into the pitch, torn apart or possibly set on fire!

EXPLOSIVE FLATULENCE

We remember Slug Dribblespit, a Bloater for the Rancid Rangers. After getting tackled one too many times, each blow producing a distressing sphinctal roar from Dribblespit's trousers, the Bloater burst apart in a shower of luminous goo – much to the delight of the crowd!

A FACE ONLY A COACH COULD LOVE

We remember Runnelsore the 'Handsome', a player so disfigured by Chaos no one could look him in the face without projectile vomiting. During a particularly vicious game, he was fouled by his own team who were busy looking the other way.

IT'S HOW WE ROLL

We remember Grumbak Bonegrinder and his magnificent Dwarf Deathroller. Drunk at the wheel, Grumbak fell into the workings of his own machine after dropping his flagon. His opponents found this immensely amusing, until the out-of-control roller flattened them.

Have you witnessed any memorable deaths on the pitch – because *Spike! Journal* wants to know! Send in your outrageous obituaries, funny fouls and mirthful murders to 'Coffin Corner, Spike! Tower, 30 Neustrasse, Altdorf'.



TEAM SPOTLIGHT

NURGLE'S ROTTERS

AS WE HERE AT *SPIKE! JOURNAL* CONTINUE OUR SERIES DELVING INTO THE HORRIFYING HISTORIES OF INFAMOUS BLOOD BOWLING OUTFITS, THIS MONTH WE CAST THE SPOTLIGHT ONTO ONE OF THE MOST REDOLENT OF TEAMS EVER TO SQUELCH AND SQUIRM THEIR WAY ONTO THE GRIDIRON; THE ONE AND ONLY NURGLE'S ROTTERS!



TEAM SPOTLIGHT

The Rotters rose to fame long ago, having the distinction of being one of the earliest Chaos teams on the circuit to dedicate themselves to a single Chaos god – Grandfather Nurgle himself. Their patron was delighted, lavishing gifts and mutations upon his favoured followers. But such good fortune has strolled hand in clammy-palmed hand with bad for the Rotters, as in many ways the beneficence of their patron has, over the years, caused more than its share of problems. They are a team with a long history of being shunned by other teams, of struggling to find opponents, and in particularly bad seasons, of struggling to maintain a healthy fanbase.

And yet there is far more to the Rotters than first appears. Look a little closer and you'll discover a wealth of fascinating detail often overlooked (what you'll discover is maggots – Ed). Join us then as we pick the scabs from the history of the Rotters and see what oozes out...

Accounts of the Rotters' founding are somewhat contradictory. What is known is that the first players on the team weren't originally dedicated to Grandfather Nurgle. Those first players only banded together and sought out the Plague God's patronage after becoming hideously and irrevocably infected by a particularly virulent strain of Nurgle's Rot when it swept through the northern towns of the Great Forest region of the Empire. At the time, many teams were in the area to play in the newly-founded Dead Wood Cup, which promised to become a memorable fixture on the calendar. Memorable it became, but not for the reasons that the organisers and sponsors had hoped, but rather for the outbreak of this most terrible plague and the decimation of the town, all thanks to the influx of players and fans attracted by the spectacle to come!

Most accounts suggest that several teams present were among a growing number in those days that harboured secret allegiances to the Chaos gods rather than blessed Nuffle – those Renegade teams that paved the way for the appearance

of true 'Chaos Chosen' teams and the ravages of Lord Borak. Indeed, in the same year that the plague overran the northern parts of the Great Forest, the infamous Chaos Renegades team, the Chaos All-Stars, first appear in the records. Perhaps being dedicated to the Dark Gods already, stories suggest that it was no time at all before many of the afflicted players from several teams had accepted the Rot as a sign of Nurgle's blessing, and they readily turned to his worship. Whilst many fell victim to the fatality of the Rot in those dark days, others present for the Dead Wood Cup were particularly favoured by Nurgle, quickly growing huge and corrupt. True avatars of Nurgle's hideous virility, they became the first Bloaters, even as others grew withered and decayed, becoming the first Rotters. These players sought each other out and banded together, forming a new team – with Nurgle's blessing they would escape the devastation and carry Nurgle's gifts to other towns and stadiums in the years to come.

Within a few short years, probably at about the same time that Beastmen began to emerge from the dark forests to play for the Chosen

teams flooding down from the North in the wake of Lord Borak's invasion of the fledgling NAF, the first Pestigor appeared on the Rotters' squad. These horrific, disease-ridden beasts, devoted from birth to the glory of Nurgle, would give the Nurgle's Rotters – as they had come to be known – their distinct line-up, one which has been thrice-blessed by Nurgle himself and which, in time and not without resistance, would become the officially recognised format for Nurgle-aligned teams.

In the decades since, many more teams dedicated to Nurgle have appeared, most coming from the North, but many emerging from within the civilised lands. To this day, none have reached the heights of infamy achieved by Nurgle's Rotters in their long and gruesome history. Today, in spite of recent setbacks, the Rotters stand poised to once again spread their influence across the leagues and tournaments of the world, bringing Nurgle's blessing to lands far and wide...



TEAM PROFILE: NURGLE'S ROTTERS

TEAM COLOURS: Green, orange and purple

OWNER: Why, it's none other than Grandfather Nurgle himself!

HEAD COACH: Captain Sven 'Four-eyes' Erikksen

PLAYERS: Humans... of a sort, Beastmen

TEAM HONOURS: Most Virulent Newcomers 2436, Borak's Choice Award 2468, Blood Bowl VIII Winners 2468

HALL OF FAME: Ivan Bouldercrusher, 'Smelly' Pete, Goran 'The Tentacle' Svengard, Tiddles the Cat

SPIKE! TEAM RATING: 198



CAREER HIGHLIGHTS



2402 The original Nurgle's Rotters emerge from a plague outbreak during the Dead Wood Cup. Caught up in the calamity, players from several teams quickly embrace their strange fortune and swear fealty to Nurgle himself. Delighted to suddenly have his own Blood Bowl team, Nurgle is a ready and willing patron as the freshly founded outfit quickly proves its winning ways over other teams competing, many of which perform terribly! In years to come, the circumstances of the team's founding encourages the fledgling NAF to enforce a strict quarantine policy before, during and after every match the Rotters take part in.

2468 The Rotters pull off an extraordinary and quite unexpected win against the Naggaroth Nightwings in the final of the Blood Bowl itself. It later transpires that the Nightwings' lodgings for the duration of the championship are owned by a devotee of Nurgle. When the time comes for the championship match, most Nightwings players have been infected with virulent ailments, and by the half-time break, several begin to turn into slug-like beasts!

2480 The Rotters lose the Blood Bowl XX championship game to the young Elfheim Eagles team. How the Eagles pull off the win is by no means certain, as much of the game is obscured by a proliferation of fecund vegetation growing rampantly across the pitch, and the presence of miasmic clouds of flies only hides the game further. An investigation is launched, but is hampered by the untimely deaths of the investigators who fall ill after interviewing Rotters players. To this day, allegations persist that the Eagles used unsanctioned High Magic and a huge vat of antiseptic to counter Nurgle's own unsanctioned interference in the game.

2488 The collapse of the NAF leaves the Rotters with a sparse fixture list and, surprisingly quickly, they begin to fall apart (both figuratively and literally – Ed). The decimated team boards ship and sets sail to Norsca to take part in an invitational match against the Arctic Cragspiders at the end of the year, but never makes it across the desolate and frozen ice floes to the Cragspiders' home stadium, far in the Norscan wilds.

2489 Rumours begin to circulate of the crew of a fishing vessel discovering the frozen body of one of the Rotters from 2488, some reports going so far as to suggest that the infamous Rotters coach, Captain Sven 'Four-eyes' Erikksen, had been rediscovered. Foolishly bringing the body on board, it quickly defrosts and infects the crew with the Rot, and other boons of Nurgle. By the time the ship arrives back at its home port, the entire crew has become the new Nurgle's Rotters, including Tiddles, the ship's cat, the feral feline transformed into a corpulent Rotspawn. Although far from the winning form of past squads, the resurgent Rotters are going from strength to strength, and it can only be a matter of time before they are back amongst the top tier teams again.

DID YOU KNOW...

Nurgle's Rotters once literally fell apart during the Southlands Jungle

Tour Tournament; the intense heat and humidity reducing their players to fleshy puddles – they still won the game, though, as their opponents refused to return to the pitch!



HALL OF FAME: NURGLE'S ROTTERS

2467-2468 SQUAD

NAME	POSITION	MA	ST	AG	AV	SKILLS
Ba'phis Bad-stream	Bloater	4	5	2	9	Block, Claw, Disturbing Presence, Foul Appearance, Mighty Blow, Nurgle's Rot, Regeneration
'Merry' Apognosis	Rotter	5	3	3	8	Catch, Decay, Nurgle's Rot, Sprint
Pligis the Pustulent	Pestigor	6	3	3	8	Block, Horns, Nurgle's Rot, Regeneration, Strip Ball, Tackle, Wrestle
Slarm Runnelsore	Rotter	5	3	3	8	Decay, Nurgle's Rot
Phoxus 'The Noxious'	Bloater	4	4	2	9	Disturbing Presence, Foul Appearance, Nurgle's Rot, Regeneration, Wrestle
Eresour Ernté	Bloater	4	4	2	9	Block, Disturbing Presence, Foul Appearance, Guard, Nurgle's Rot, Regeneration, Stand Firm, Tentacles
Fezrilith Goom	Rotter	5	3	3	8	Decay, Nurgle's Rot, Pass, Sure Hands
Blothar Festergut	Bloater	4	4	2	9	Block, Disturbing Presence, Foul Appearance, Nurgle's Rot, Regeneration
Rogaer von Ratlinger	Rotter	5	3	3	8	Block, Decay, Nurgle's Rot, Tackle
Fthoras the Feculent	Pestigor	7	3	3	8	Dodge, Extra Arms, Horns, Nurgle's Rot, Regeneration, Sure Hands
Herperitus Infectus	Rotter	5	3	3	8	Decay, Nurgle's Rot, Wrestle
Ba'gom 'Brown Britches'	Rotter	5	3	3	8	Decay, Guard, Nurgle's Rot
Elyvix Pestilent	Rotspawn	4	5	1	9	Disturbing Presence, Foul Appearance, Loner, Mighty Blow, Nurgle's Rot, Really Stupid, Regeneration, Stand Firm, Tentacles
Nurgле's Rotters	3 Assistant Coaches			3 Re-rolls		
Nurgле Team	7 Cheerleaders			7 Fan Factor		
Head Coach Sven 'Four-eyes' Eriksen	1 Plague Doctor			Total Cost of Team 2,020,000 gold pieces		

TEAM SPECIAL RULE: Nurgле's Rotters were the original Nurgле team, the first to bear his strange gifts openly on the Blood Bowl pitch. As a result, they enjoy his enormous affections like no other. This is evident not only in their plethora of mutations, but in the boons they enjoy off-pitch as well.

When rolling to see how many fans are in attendance at the beginning of the game, the Nurgле's Rotters coach may choose to roll an additional D3. The result of this roll is subtracted from their opponent's 2D6 roll to determine how many fans are in attendance, and added to the 2D6 roll made by the Nurgле's Rotters. This represents virulent plagues and contagion breaking out in the stands and the fevered fans quickly deciding to support the Rotters in the hope of forgiveness from their patron.

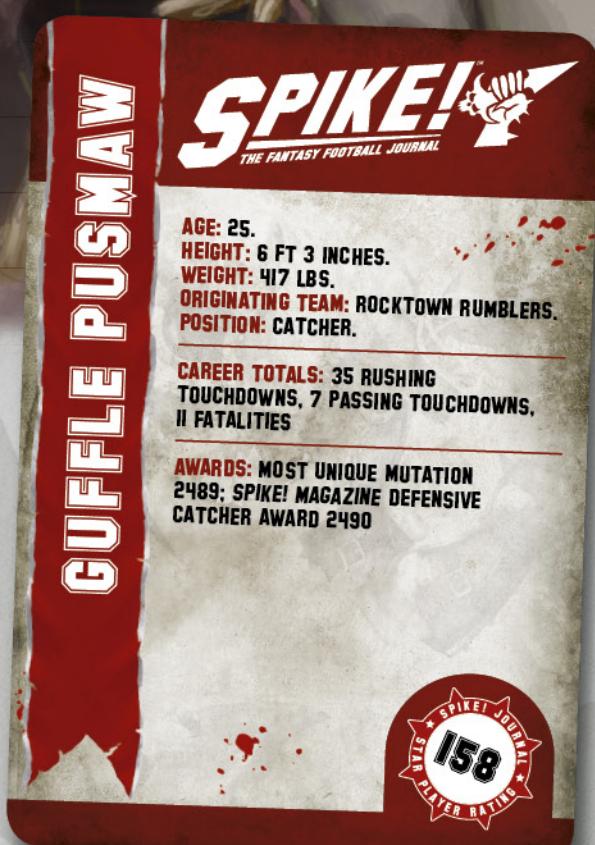
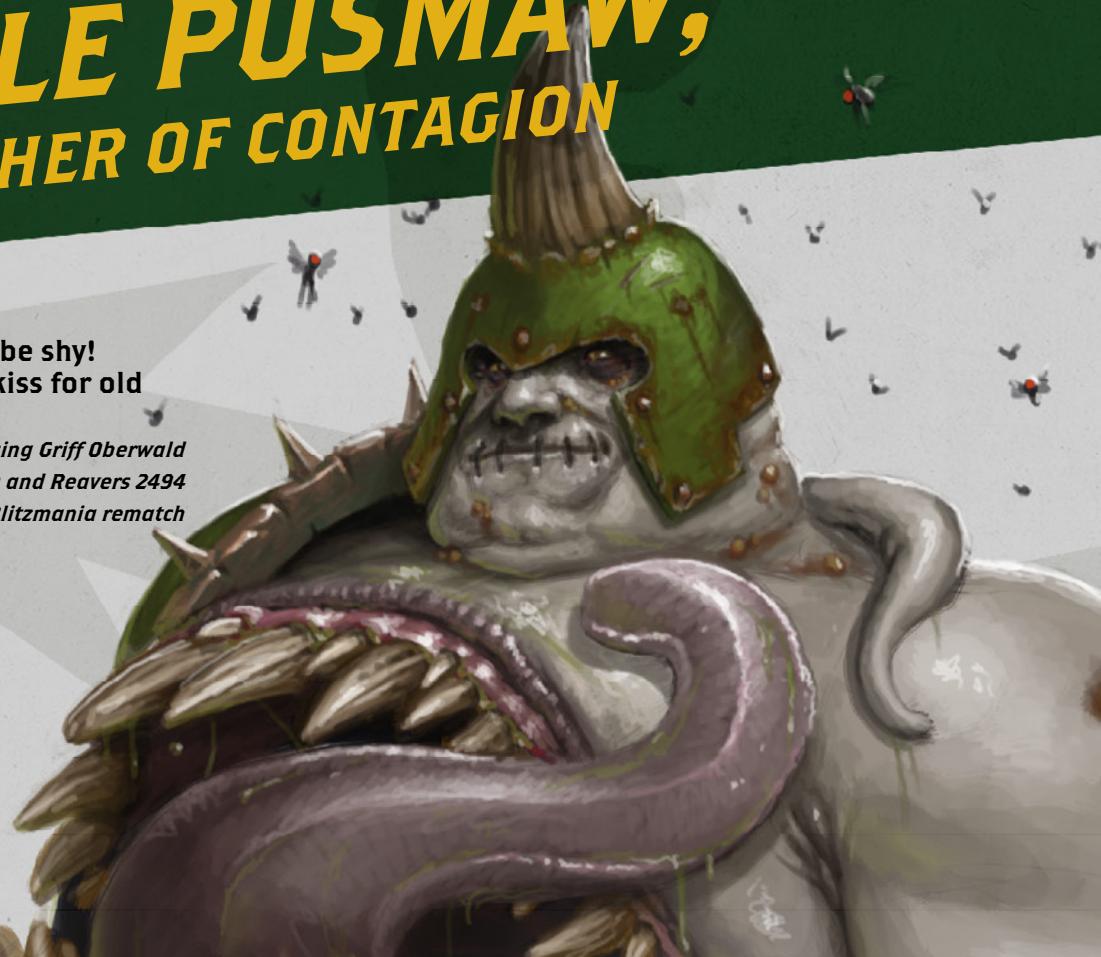
Additionally, the Nurgле's Rotters have a Plague Doctor Inducement as a permanent fixture amongst their sideline staff, as shown in the above team roster.



GUFFLE PUSMAW, THE CATCHER OF CONTAGION

"Come on Griff, don't be shy!
Give us a big, sloppy kiss for old
times' sake!"

*Guffle Pusmaw, addressing Griff Oberwald
ahead of the Rotters and Reavers 2494
Blitzmania rematch*



STAR PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

Alongside our regular features exploring the lives and lauding the achievements of the most long-standing luminaries of the game, we here at *Spike! Journal* are dedicated to bringing you, the reader, all of the latest news. We've been spending time with several up-and-coming future stars of the gridiron, following each around for a week or two, watching them in training, learning their routines, and asking them all of the important questions.

This month, our roving reporter Glick Martzmann has been spending some time with young Guffle Pusmaw. Sadly, Glick was forced to cut his time with Guffle short after contracting an unexpected dose of Bowelsteep! We're sure readers will join us in wishing Glick a speedy recovery and we all hope to see him leave the lavatory soon!

Several seasons ago, the rookie player Guffle Pusmaw (real name, no gimmicks) was serving his time as third reserve Catcher for the Rocktown Rumblers, hoping to get enough exposure on the pitch to make a name for himself. His big chance came when the Rumblers faced the re-emergent Nurgle's Rotters in a small tournament in Stirland, the Stirhügels Challenge Cup (they throw pig dung at strangers there for good luck, it's no wonder the Rotters keep going back – Ed). Brought on late in the game due to the loss of several of the more experienced Catchers, Guffle is the first to admit that he failed to shine, though argues that the fault was not all his. The Rumblers Thrower wasn't on top form, discomfited by the presence of the Rotters and unable to connect with any of his Catchers throughout the game.

The Rotters won the match and the Rumblers' casualty toll was high. However, even as his team-mates slunk away to the locker room, the exuberant young Guffle, buoyed up on the excitement of playing before a crowd (of three dozen pig farmers! – Ed) made a fatal error; he agreed to swap jerseys with one of the Rotters' players! In the stunned silence that descended as young Guffle pulled on his prize, he quickly realised he had made a terrible error in judgement. Feeling waves of nausea wash over him instantly, he fled to the safety of his team's locker room, only to find the doors hastily barred against him and news of his dismissal relayed through the keyhole! Destitute and demoralised, the young player went on his way, alone.

As the gifts of Nurgle he had contracted on that fateful day took hold of his physical form, and his attitude towards his condition changed, Pusmaw set to work once again. Training in solitude to learn how best to use the changes that wracked his body, he began to notice that the gifts of Nurgle were in fact increasing his skill as a player. Even though his growing girth affected his pace, young Guffle was particularly delighted when he awoke one morning to find that his swollen gut had split wide open to reveal a drooling, snaggle-toothed maw. Understanding that he had a duty to put this gift to good use, he trained all the harder. Every minute of Guffle's night and day was dedicated to perfecting his catching skills, until he could catch a ball between those blubbery lips better than he ever could with his hands. In time, Guffle set out to find the Rotters, following them on their campaign trail until he caught up with them before trying out and proving the worth of his gifts to them. Signed on the spot, Guffle quickly became a mainstay of the new Rotters squad; his fame, like an outbreak of acne, exploding overnight. It remains to be seen what levels of success he might achieve should he ever have the fortune to play alongside a team-mate that can actually throw the blessed ball...



GUFFLE PUSMAW CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2489 Facing the re-emergent

Nurgl's Rotters in his first season as a professional player, the young rookie Guffle Pusmaw gets his big chance to shine in front of a sell-out crowd of Stirland's finest (Stirland's finest six-toed yokels – Ed). His performance is mediocre at best, and the game ends in an embarrassing defeat. However, the turning point for young Guffle comes post-game when he, for some unknowable reason, agrees to swap jerseys with one of the opposition!

2491 Having come to terms with his

altered fortunes, Pusmaw seeks out and joins the Rotters, his unique skillset and foul appearance making him a natural fit with Nurgl's favourite team. Coach Sven 'Four-eyes' Eriksen is pleased to welcome the talented rookie on board and quickly sets him to work, his agility and unique ball handling prowess a boon to the Rotters during a period of rebuilding, helping the team reach the play-off stages of the 2491 Full Beard Cup.

2493 Guffle's celebrity status is secured

during a match against the Reikland Reavers, in the opening stages of the Blitzmania league. Reavers' stalwart Griff Oberwald and Guffle get into a face-off over possession of the ball, a face-off Guffle wins when Griff, fearful of losing his arms at the elbow to the bite of his opponent's massive mutant mouth, lets go of the ball! Griff is knocked aside and Guffle surges forward to score the decider.

2495 Following a very

public falling out between the increasingly egotistical Pusmaw and Rotters fan-favourite, Tiddles the Cat, Pusmaw allows himself to be swayed by the wildly erratic counsel of Lord Borak. The youngster decides that he has far more to offer on the road, playing for teams that need his unique gifts and are willing to make the most use of them. Cutting all ties with Nurgl's Rotters, Pusmaw ventures forth alone as a freebooter, to spread his patron's gifts far and wide.

DID YOU KNOW...

The huge Emperor Luitpold I Stadium in Altdorf keeps a regiment of chainsaw-armed groundsmen on retainer for when Nurgl teams are in attendance (sponsored by the Crown Prince – himself a keen patron of the sport and major stakeholder in the stadium) after the Screaming Shrubberies incident of 2490.

CHAT WITH THE RAT

IN THE GARDEN OF NURGLE

Hackspit 'the Scribbler' Quillchewer is our ace Skaven reporter on the pitch, scrabbling down among the blood and gore to get to the juicy meat of the game and bringing you the real story on today's Blood Bowl superstars – this issue, our faithful rat chews the ear of Bilerot Vomitflesh about being a follower of Nurgle and asks the hard questions, such as... Just where is the Garden of Nurgle, and would you want to take your date there?

QUILLCHEWER: So, Bilerot – our readers want to know, what's with all the weird plants that keep springing up during Nurgle team games?

BILEROT: It's a bit embarrassing really, the Plaguefather just keeps lavishing gifts upon his chosen – why, just this morning, I woke up with a wonderfully weeping wart on my-

QUILLCHEWER: Garden?

BILEROT: Yes... As I was saying, Nurgle is a god of life, growth and infestation, his plagues and pustules just another way of repurposing what was rotting meat or boring old dirt into something truly special. These are his gifts, and he grows them in his own private garden – its winding paths and sucking bogs filled with milky-eyed flies hovering over great big-

QUILLCHEWER: Cheeses?

BILEROT: People really have Nurgle all wrong. They think that he is all diseases, such as the Galloping Trots or the Crimson Madness, but I ask you, how can an old man that keeps

a garden be a bad guy? I mean I've never been there, but I've seen postcards and, as you know, Nurgle has hosted the Chaos Cup on more than one occasion. In fact, I think he has built his own Blood Bowl stadium – the Pasadena Rot Bowl – which hopefully we'll all get a chance to see next time the Garden of Nurgle transposes itself onto part of the Old World!

QUILLCHEWER: Right. Plants, flies, lots of rot. So is the Plague Father trying to give his players an edge by bringing this entire blighted wilderness to the Old World?

BILEROT: Not at all, Hackspit, Nurgle just wants to spread his bounty to the whole Blood Bowl community. As you know, I myself got the 'itch' from old Papa Nurgle when I was starting out and it really gave me a boost. Now, if you're talking about the whole deadly plagues and ruin thing, then I think that is more the bag of your master the Horned Ra-

QUILLCHEWER: Silence! Silence! Rat God not for you... blessed be his name... good master... don't listen to rot man... he doesn't know...

BILEROT: Umm... do you need a moment?

QUILLCHEWER: No-no! So, Bilerot, you're saying Nurgle is like Lord Nuffle, just wanting to give gifts to all of the coaches, players and fans?

BILEROT: That's right. People think of us as all nasty rashes and weeping sores, but that's just the surface stuff. What Nurgle brings to the game – the bounty of his Garden if you will – cannot be measured! I mean, look at those Khorne boys leaving stadiums in a shambles with corpses all over the place, or the teams dedicated to the Lord of Change, always transforming fans into pot plants and the like. I'll say here once and for all, Quillchewer, Nurgle is a giver not a taker, just ask anyone who has ever gone to one of our games – they always go home with something they didn't come in with! ☺



STAR PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

BILEROT VOMITFLESH

Life on the road can be hard for a young Blood Bowl player. Away from home, constantly training, the pressure of competition, it all adds up. Consequently it is not uncommon for talented rookies to fall into bad habits, copying the heavy drinking and partying of their older team-mates. Unfortunately, young players lack the experience and wisdom that comes with age; they make errors of judgement and fall in with bad influences.

Many are the tales told by old coaches to discourage their young charges from such foolishness. In recent years, the tale of Bilerot Vomitflesh has become a favourite of coaches far and wide. The fall of Bilerot Vomitflesh is a cautionary lesson to young players of all races.





The story of Bilerot Vomitflesh is one that tells of a promising young player who went a-wandering with his team, a fresh-faced recruit eager to prove his worth and find lasting fame and glory. In this respect, young Wilhelm von Mitfleisch, as he was once known, was not unlike a thousand other young players who set out each year to become legends of the game. Unfortunately for von Mitfleisch, he was soon to become seduced by the life of a pro player. The evils of drink, gambling and other, more sinful pleasures were made available to him, and he was eager to partake of them all (at this point in the telling of the tale, a coach will usually glower at the more experienced members of the team until they stop grinning wistfully). Von Mitfleisch had his whole career ahead of him, but he threw it away through his lifestyle of heavy drinking and many other excesses. He never slept properly, he rarely ate well, and his health and physique quickly began to fade. He contracted all manner of itching and burning lice and mites from the decrepit dens of vice he so enjoyed, but this did nothing to sate his appetite for life! Worse, the rookie hid his dark secrets from his team-mates, and over the course of the season, they all contracted numerous niggling health problems.

In time, as his secrets were uncovered, von Mitfleisch ran away in shame to join another team, only for history to repeat itself. He carried on running, leaving a trail of embarrassment in his wake and becoming reviled by all but the foulest teams on the circuit. Eventually, von Mitfleisch found a new home with the Diseased Destroyers, who could smell one of their own a mile away. By now, lying and cheating had become second nature to him, and he would go on to earn a reputation as one of the filthiest players around – both literally and figuratively!

By this point in the tale, the rookies are usually mightily amused, even if some are fighting down the urge to scratch an itch or two, and who can blame them! It sounds like such a ridiculous tale made up to scare the young recruits fresh from the Crush! Of course, it is at this point that the coach will reveal that von Mitfleisch went on to become Bilerot Vomitflesh, often waving around woodcuts of the infamous Rotter from past copies of *Spike! Magazine* (Available weekly from your nearest newsstand, readers – Ed), or making them watch old Cabalvision footage of him playing for the Diseased Destroyers, scratching and squirming uncomfortably in his straining britches on the line of scrimmage...

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2467 Fresh faced and full of wonder, the youngster known as Wilhelm von Mitfleisch earns glory at the end of season Crush, impressing several of the coaches present with his solid frame and capability as a defensive Lineman. He receives several offers and is able to negotiate a very favourable rookie contract.

2469 Von Mitfleisch quickly settles into his new life, excelling on-pitch and making his team-mates and coach proud. He also earns a reputation as quite the party animal, spending much of his time in dens of iniquity! Unfortunately, his careless conduct soon catches up with him. Before the end of his second season, he is sacked in shame following a string of complaints from team-mates about his hygiene, a number of shocking

articles appearing in the press and one bad report too many from the team Apothecary!

2473 After several seasons of moving from team to team, von Mitfleisch has gained a poor reputation both on and off the pitch. In his wake lies a string of angered coaches and players, not to mention a host of club and bar owners! His decline in stature from promising rookie to unwanted outcast has an impact upon his play style, and where once he was growing in renown for his skill in defence, he now quickly becomes known for his tendency to stick the boot into a downed opponent and worse! By the end of the 2473 season, he is reduced to playing in illegal and violent Street Bowl leagues.

2475 After a couple of seasons in the sport's underbelly, von Mitfleisch finds himself out of favour even amongst the violent thugs of the Street Bowl scene, with no team willing to have his increasingly bloated and diseased lump contaminating their communal baths. No team, that is, until the Diseased Destroyers sniff him out. Sensing a kinship with these devotees of Nurgle, von Mitfleisch is quick to sign up. After years of struggling to fit in, he once again finds himself amongst equals and back in the big leagues. In recognition of his new home, and giving thanks to his new patron, Grandfather Nurgle, von Mitfleisch changes his name to Bilerot Vomitflesh and the rest, as they say, is history!

DIRT FROM THE DUGOUT

THROWING IN THE TOWEL

Mindy Piewhistle is our Halfling on the spot when it comes to the dishy dirt and salacious scandals that our readers have come to know and love. This issue, Mindy sheds some light on the rivalry between the Dark Gods, and some of their insidious locker room shenanigans.



SPIKE!: We welcome back Mindy to the pages of Spike! Journal, looking a little worse for wear after shadowing the Rotters for their last few games – why don't you tell us all what you learned in your time with Nurgle's favourite pus bags.

MINDY: Well, let me tell you, I usually don't mind hanging around the sidelines, but those Nurgle boys... I've seen things... things I can't forget...

SPIKE!: Mindy?

MINDY: I've certainly gotten a new appreciation of the phrase 'warts and all'!

SPIKE!: I bet you have – but what about the Chaos teams?

MINDY: Well... we all know there is little love lost between the Chaos gods, as was so eloquently explored in Lord Borak's soul-searching biography of the Chaos gods Four Brothers Without a Father. But I can tell you right here that teams like the Rotters have taken the rivalry between the Chaos teams to an all new level.

SPIKE!: So what have those... ummm... Rotters? Been up to? Spiking the Slaughterade, summoning daemonic-possessed balls, talking smack about Renegades and Chosen players on Cabalvision?

MINDY: Worse than that – they've been sharing their towels!

SPIKE!: Dear Nuffle, no!

MINDY: That's right, you read it here first – the well-known Fly Guys laundry service is in fact secretly owned by the Rotters and has been dealing in their used Blood Bowl sporting kit!

SPIKE!: I'm sure that isn't the kind of fly most teams thought they were signing up for.

MINDY: Thankfully, it seems that many coaches and team owners are on to the Fly Guys and they've been making other arrangements for their dirty kit, but I'm afraid the damage might already have been done. After missing a season, the Ostland Mastiffs have reappeared as

the Pusland Maggots, while famed mercenary Catcher Duke Skyreacher has been seen looking very green and going by the name Puke Drytetcher.

Then there are the Wasteland Bloodwarriors, that we all know were Chaos Chosen poster boys – well, guess who just signed up for the Sea of Claws Open, none other than the Witherland Rotwarriors, looking considerably less ferocious than when we last saw their players!

No one can prove for sure that the Rotters are behind all of this, but Nurgle certainly seems very pleased with them – which is all I'm going to say on the subject!

SPIKE!: So the message here seems to be always know where your towel has been... now I think I need to go and wash my hands.

NURGLE PLAYBOOK



For many opponents, facing a Nurgle team brings a whole new level of fear to the game of Blood Bowl. They combine the best elements of the classic Chaos Chosen teams – a core of high strength, heavily armoured Bloater with the fast and agile Pestigors, all wrapped up within a disease-ridden package sure to make the hardiest of constitutions fail! However, not unlike the Chosen, they can be tougher to coach early in their career than they might first appear, needing careful handling (using rubber gloves – Ed) as a rookie team.

This playbook, penned by veteran Nurgle player and beard aficionado J-Bone, seeks to give those freshly infected with a love of Nurgle some insights into the challenges ahead!

DID YOU KNOW...

Many sports fans think that Nurgle's Rotters' beloved Rotspawn, Tiddles, is the first mutated moggy to take to the gridiron, but in actual fact that honour goes to Mr. Pickles, the unconventional mascot of the Hell Pit Heroes. Sadly, Mr. Pickles' debut in 2478 proved disastrous for his Skaven team-mates and his career was cut short!

THE BASICS

Nurgles teams are sometimes seen as one of the more daunting teams to coach, due to their unusual starting skills and the fragility of their Linemen. Yet they are truly one of the best defensive teams in the game, able to grow and become a truly offensive powerhouse.

The key to successfully coaching a Nurgle team early on in its career lies in controlling the movement of the opposing team. The strength of the front line can be used to steer the opposition down a particular flank, whilst the Rotspawn can literally hold opposing players on the spot, allowing the coach to position the rest of the team to move in for the kill.

The biggest hurdles for most rookie Nurgle coaches are the expensive re-rolls and the lack of blocking or ball-handling skills early in the team's development. As with Chaos Chosen teams, a Nurgle coach will be wanting to bash through the opposition in order to both score touchdowns and earn skill upgrades for players, but this can be a risky proposition before such mainstays as the Block skill have been liberally applied to the team. Turnovers due to failed blocks will occur, and sometimes these must be accepted to save that re-roll for the vital turns later in the drive. Before hammering away at the opposition, prepare for failure! This is a good habit to get into for any Blood Bowl team, but especially for a rookie Nurgle team. Carefully consider positioning before throwing that block in case the Bloater rolls skulls and leaves a hole in the defensive line the entire opposition can slip through!

BUILDING A NURGLE TEAM

Whilst there are many ways to build a Nurgle team, it must be accepted that there is no way to fit in everything available at first. The positional players available to Nurgle teams are expensive, and so are the re-rolls. A compromise will always have to be made. Having at least two re-rolls is vital when starting, but the more that are added, the more positional players must be dropped from the starting roster. This means saving up for them later, but as the price of a re-roll is doubled to 140,000 gp after the start of a season, taking that extra re-roll in place of that fourth Bloater to begin with is sometimes the right decision.

Unlike their Chosen brethren, Nurgle teams often field a big guy, the Rotspawn, from creation. Consequently, a starting Nurgle team might contain one Rotspawn, three Bloaters, a lone Pestigor and six Rotters. Combined with three team re-rolls, this comes in at exactly 1,000,000 gold pieces and provides a reliable starting roster thanks to the number of re-rolls.

A riskier approach, but one that provides even more much-needed strength on the line of scrimmage, is to take a mere two team re-rolls, only five Rotters, and spend the difference on a fourth Bloater, again creating a nice, round 1,000,000 gold pieces starting team. Both options have their merits and drawbacks, and coaches may also wish to consider forgoing the Rotspawn for now and fielding an extra Pestigor or two, though these players are easier to buy in once the season has begun than a Rotspawn, due to their relatively low cost.

FEVERISH RUMINATIONS

The linchpin of any respectable Nurgle team is a Rotspawn. This is arguably the best Strength 5 player in the game. Whilst it is slow and suffers from one of the most difficult negative traits to deal with in Really Stupid, it more than makes up for it with the frustration it will cause an opponent. Tentacles on a Strength 5 player is amongst the most agonising of things to have to manage. Nobody wants their players stuck next to a deadly mass of writhing teeth and tentacles! Add to this the fact that if a player decides to hit the Rotspawn, they will likely have to utilise several assists and then may fail their Foul Appearance roll and just stand there, frozen in horror, resulting in even more opposing players stuck within those lovely tentacles. As such, most players will try to avoid a Rotspawn like the proverbial plague, allowing it to dominate a very large section of the pitch.

Of course, all of this hinges upon the big issue with the Rotspawn – Really Stupid! Activating this player is a risk, and if possible, they must be accompanied by another player at all times. It may seem counter-intuitive, but it is often wiser to consider not activating a Rotspawn on many occasions, as a failed Really Stupid roll will result in the loss of those vital Tentacles tackle zones, allowing key players to go free and control of the opposition to be lost, not to mention the risk of a failed block on a player that does not possess the Block skill and is a Loner!



The Rotspawn is not the only star in the Nurgle roster though. The Bloaters, whilst less agile than the average Chaos Chosen, are as strong, as heavily armoured and even more survivable with their fantastic combination of Foul Appearance and Regeneration. The opposition may not even get the opportunity to hit them, and any that are removed as casualties may not stay that way! A line of Bloaters can be one of the most protective defensive lines a team can face off against in Blood Bowl.

Whilst the Bloaters hold the line, the blitzing, ball carrying and safety duties will most often be handled by the Pestigors. These faster, more agile players are incredibly flexible. They start with Horns, which gives them the ability to perform a two-dice Blitz on most opposition ball-carriers, but the real key to these players lies in their incredible skill access. A Pestigor may choose any General, Strength or Mutation skills on a normal improvement roll. Between these

three groups of skills, they can be built into almost any type of player an aspiring Blood Bowl coach could desire. It is often difficult to fit more than a single Pestigor into a Nurgle team to begin with, but another one or more will prove great additions after a few games and well worth saving up the winnings for.

The rest of any starting Nurgle roster will be filled out with an unhealthy dose of Rotters. These diseased Linemen are a puzzling proposition for a lot of coaches when first starting out with a Nurgle team, but once they have been worked out, they can be a fantastic position to play with. With no access to either an Apothecary or the Regeneration skill, Rotters are one of only a rare few positionals in Blood Bowl that have no chance of avoiding a casualty once inflicted. Pair this with the Decay trait, meaning any casualties inflicted can cause up to two Serious Injuries and double the chance of instant death, and they become possibly the most disposable Linemen around. Rotters live fast, die young and are

easily replaced. Use these guys for fouling, high-risk marking duties and protecting the more valuable players. And don't forget that if a Nurgle team kills an opposing player, they may be resurrected after the match to fill out the Nurgle roster. This makes up nicely for their short lifespans!



NURGLE DEVELOPMENT AND TACTICS

Nurgle teams have a wide choice of skills available to their players and this is the key to making them truly effective. There are many development routes a player may take. Here are some examples, based on the role a player might fulfil in a team:

PLAYER ROLE	NORMAL SKILLS	DOUBLE SKILLS	STAT INCREASES
Rotspawn	Break Tackle, Guard, Stand Firm	Block, Claw, Dodge, Prehensile Tail, Pro	+ST
Ball Carrier (Pestigor)	Block, Extra Arms or Sure Hands, Two Heads	Dodge	+MA
Safety (Pestigor)	Frenzy, Strip Ball, Tackle, Wrestle	Dodge	+AG
Killer (Pestigor)	Block, Claw, Mighty Blow, Piling On, Tackle		
Blocker (Bloater)	Block, Claw, Guard, Mighty Blow, Stand Firm, Tentacles		
Standard Lineman (Rotter)	Block or Wrestle, Tackle	Guard	
Vicious Lineman (Rotter)	Block, Claw	Mighty Blow	
Fouler (Rotter)	Dirty Player		

SKILL SELECTION

Once a few matches have been played and the team begins to develop, Nurgle teams really start to come into their own. Due to the wide variety of ways in which any of the players can be built, the potential within the roster begins to bloom once a handful of skills have been scattered amongst the players. As mentioned previously, the first concern for any Nurgle coach should be the three Bs: Block, Block and Block. In order to avoid frequent and costly turnovers with a team that wants to be playing a heavy blocking game, a good cross-section of the team requires this skill. It will help both offensively and defensively, dramatically reducing the chances of a turnover on every block made.

Once the main players – the Bloaters, a Pestigor and a Rotter or two – have Block, the next skills selected are most often a mix of Guard and Mighty Blow. Whilst most Nurgle positionals have access to Claw, it should be carefully considered. Mighty Blow is most often more useful as it applies to all armour values across the board and when armour is broken without modification can aid in removing players from the pitch. However, in a league filled with high-armour teams such as Dwarfs or Orcs, the larger bonus that Claw gives against armour rolls can be incredibly powerful.

THE BALL

The second priority is to address the other critical issue that Nurgle teams suffer with early in their careers: developing a reliable ball-carrier. This should be a Pestigor, as they have the best Movement characteristic on the roster, are more survivable than the Rotters and are able to Blitz free of trouble using their Horns. The first skill should be either Sure Hands or Extra Arms. Both have their advantages. Many coaches argue

that Sure Hands is the better choice for the act of picking up the ball as the re-roll greatly enhances the likelihood of success. The Extra Arms skill, however, applies its bonus not only to pick-ups but also to catches and interceptions. The boost to interceptions is a highly situational advantage, but the ability to better catch the ball gives the opportunity to hand-off or pass to the Pestigor early on to help it score touchdowns and earn those vital SPPs.

Which skill to select is largely down to play-style and personal preference, but it is well worth considering.

Later in their development, having both skills on the ball carrier is very powerful.

a good chance of avoiding the negatives of Really Stupid, Prehensile Tail makes dodging out from the Rotspawn's tackle zones an even more intimidating prospect, Block can make a Rotspawn far more survivable whilst also making it far more deadly, and Dodge can double as a defensive skill whilst also pairing nicely with Break Tackle. And, of course, a Strength increase is to be seriously considered – making both the Tentacles escape rolls and Blocks on the Rotspawn more difficult is invaluable.

THE ROTSPAWN

Amongst the most interesting of players to develop within a Nurgle team is the Rotspawn. Which skills to take on this unique player is quite the puzzle. On normal Skill rolls, Guard can be incredibly effective at stopping players from blitzing free of Tentacles, Break Tackle can be good for unexpectedly changing position or even jamming a Rotspawn in amongst a group of enemy players, and Stand Firm gives even more control over the pitch, allowing a Rotspawn to hold its position indefinitely. However, it is on double Skill rolls that the really interesting choices can be made. Pro can be very useful as it gives



TACTICAL APPLICATION OF PESTILENCE

Whilst the development of the team is undoubtedly important, it also needs to be pointed out that, to use a Nurgle team effectively, a cunning approach to positioning key players needs to be taken.

For instance, it is one of the only teams in which the big guy is best utilised in defence by pulling it back and away from the line of scrimmage.

Due to their unique skill set, placing a Rotspawn in the centre of the pitch, around four squares back from the line of scrimmage, can be incredibly effective. Sometimes in Blood Bowl, it is better to be reactive than proactive, and this is a perfect example. If a Rotspawn is placed centrally on the line of scrimmage, it can easily be outpaced by most receivers, which risks making it little more than a roadblock in the centre of the pitch. This role is far better filled by the Bloaters, who do not suffer from Really Stupid and can gain the Block skill with ease.

If a Rotspawn is held back as a safety player, it can move with the flow of the offense, effectively tying down at least one potential receiver. The Rotspawn is particularly good at tying up a receiver in this way, not only because of the Tentacles skill, but because a ball thrown to that receiver suffers both the negative modifier for the tackle zone the Rotspawn exerts and also an additional negative modifier for the Disturbing Presence skill! This can force even the most agile player to fumble an accurately thrown ball.

Having said this, it is not always wise or necessary to have a Rotspawn chasing players around the pitch. With their low movement and the rather high risk of Really Stupid ruining a perfectly solid defence, it is often better to attempt to get it into a strong position and to use other players, such as the fast, relatively agile and, above all, horned Pestigors to deal with opposition players seeking to break through the Nurgle team's defence, at the least pushing such unwelcome threats into the waiting tentacles of a stationary Rotspawn, at best Blitzing them to the ground and ending their run toward the End Zone. It is best to think of a Rotspawn as a grotesque black hole, pulling in players, never to be utilised again, whilst other players clear up the residue and protect the wide zones. Bloaters bring down Linemen and Blitzers, protecting the line of scrimmage and midfield. Pestigors hunt receivers and runners in wide zones and far back. And all the while the Rotters help and support, ready to exert a tackle zone, offer an assist, or stick in an unexpected boot!



EXAMPLE OF A DEFENSIVE NURGLE SET-UP

It is important to remember that Disturbing Presence is a cumulative modifier. A rookie Nurgle team could have five players with Disturbing Presence on the field at any one time. Used correctly, these can really shut down the opposing team's passing game. Until the offense commits to a particular play, it is usually best to keep the players with Disturbing Presence spread evenly across the centre of the board. The Bloaters and Rotspawn that possess the skill have a Movement of 4, so if they are crowded together, it can be easy for a quicker team to merely avoid the area of effect. Once the play develops, though, it can pay to crowd a group of players with Disturbing Presence together to make a successful passing play almost impossible. Do not forget that Disturbing Presence works whether or not the player that possesses it is standing. This can mean that sometimes a BLOATER diving head-first into a group of tackle zones can be an important game-saving manoeuvre!



EXAMPLE OF AN OFFENSIVE NURGLE SET-UP

On offense, a Nurgle team will rely heavily on causing damage, forcing the defensive line back each turn and looking to take advantage of any gaps that are opened up by injured opposing players or poor positioning.

Due to their low Agility and Movement, a Nurgle team is particularly susceptible to a Blitz result on the Kick-off table. For this reason, it is best to keep players out on the wings, to make it far harder for even a fast, agile player to reach the mid-field area where the ball is most likely to land. It is also advisable to keep a Lineman back behind the offensive line in order to help form the beginnings of a cage or just to put an extra tackle zone on the ball in the case of a risky pick-up.

Once these considerations are dealt with, the task at hand is to cause the opponent some serious (and hopefully permanent) pain. Make the most of the Strength of the Bloaters and Rotspawn on the line of scrimmage. It is generally possible to generate a three-dice block for the Rotspawn on the line of scrimmage against an average Strength 3 team by knocking down players and keeping two Bloaters central as a pair of assists. Making moves like these are essential to reduce the risk of a failed block with the Rotspawn.



KEY



BLOATER



PESTIGOR



ROTSPOWN



ROTTER



TOURNAMENT AND EXHIBITION MATCHES

For Tournaments and Exhibition Matches, there is an incredible amount of variety to the ways in which a coach can build a Nurgle team. A popular team value for Exhibition Matches and the general standard for Tournament play is 1,100,000 gold crowns and an allotment of six skills. A popular skill set for such games is five normal skills and one double, giving coaches a good selection of skills to choose from and adding greatly to the experience of playing stand-alone games. This can make a Rotspawn far more reliable in Tournament and Exhibition Play by starting their games with Block. The extra gold is useful as it can make up for the expense of the team's players and allow an extra Pestigor on the roster and perhaps a twelfth player for when Decay kicks in (or even better, for fouling!).

As Nurgle teams are seen as one of the more challenging teams to field in Tournament or Exhibition Play, they are often allowed extra skills over a higher tiered team such a Wood Elves or Dwarves. In this type of setting, they can really come into their own. Any added skills or gold can really make the Nurgle team turn a corner and become quite a solid team to play against, making them a match for any team in the hands of a skilled coach!

If the amount of gold on offer is substantial, then a Star Player is often the way to go. A player that starts with a group of skills that is intended for a certain role on the pitch can be invaluable, making up for the lack of skills elsewhere on the team. An alternative to this approach is adding a killer player such as Max Spleenripper who comes armed with a chainsaw. Chainsaws are not at all reliable, but they can have a devastating effect upon the opposition and can be a lot of fun!

SUMMARY

The Nurgle team may be challenging, but it is also amongst the most rewarding teams in Blood Bowl. Due to the wide variety of options available, every Nurgle team is individual, and this is what makes them so much fun to play with and against. They have their own style of play but are surprisingly adaptable later in their development. Experiment with different skill choices and you will inevitably express your own personal play-style through the team that you build.

So, there we have it. Proof that, just like a rotting tentacle growing out of your chest cavity, Nurgle teams can be difficult to deal with early on but can grow into something truly impressive.



STAR PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

BULLA SHARDHORN, THE CLEAVED BEAST

Many Beastmen come and go from the great game of Blood Bowl, but rarely do they make a lasting impression upon the fair sport, so often is their star eclipsed by the champions they play alongside. And this is strange, for down the years there have been many great Beastman players who display true star quality and a natural skill that belies their bestial nature. However, this month at *Spike! Journal*, we've endeavoured to bring our readers an in-depth look at our favourite of pox-ridden Beasts, the ever popular Bulla Shardhorn. A player who has left a wide trail of disease and destruction in his wake over the years, and who shows no signs of stopping!



Quite what draws the Beastmen that dwell within the dark forests of the world forth to play Blood Bowl remains a mystery. Every year they emerge in veritable droves, a small number forming their own teams to ravage nearby stadiums and spread destruction. A few may be found playing with Chaos Renegade teams, though these tend to be feeble Ungor and wretched turnskins, as their larger brethren shun simple renegades for the most part. The vast majority are drawn to more... 'potent' Chaos teams, be they dedicated to the Dark Gods as a pantheon or following a single patron god, such as the many blessed teams that play for Nurgle. Beastmen seem strangely deferential to both the mighty Chosen and the hideous Bloaters, seeing in them the gods' blessings made manifest.

One such Beastman to have ventured forth from his kind's dark habitat is Bulla Shardhorn, drawn forth as a young Gor by the lure of the ever-present violence that hangs over the Blood Bowl stadiums of the Old World. Shardhorn, riddled as his foul form ever was with pox and contagion, was compelled by an unknown urge to approach the Diseased Destroyers as they made camp on the outskirts of the town of Basdahl, near the great Drakwald Forest in preparation for an upcoming tournament. Recognising a child of their patron, Shardhorn was allowed to try out, the Destroyers, like any other Nurgle team, always on the lookout for fresh players to replace losses.

Over the course of one short season, Shardhorn earned his lasting place amongst the Destroyers, his natural instincts for the game combined with the boons of his dark

patron marking him for greatness. His right arm withered even as other spindly appendages blossomed, enhancing his prowess with the ball. From the left side of his head, a second face began to protrude until in time his whole head split along its length into two, enhancing his ability to dodge ferocious tackles. His horns grew and twisted into a savage crown of brutal blades, becoming weapons he would frequently use to gut opposition players. But more than this, Shardhorn developed an impressive collection of ailments and contagions. Boils and carbuncles erupted, his flesh began to stretch and split, and his stench became so great that he was sanctioned by the NAF for corroding the Blood Bowl trophy simply by visiting the Old Bowl trophy room on a day trip to Altdorf!* Truly, Shardhorn has become the epitome of a foul Pestigor, and an inspiration to his kind as his reputation grows.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2474 Bulla Shardhorn debuts for the Diseased Destroyers at the Basdahl Bash. In his first game, he is sent off for impaling Nobby Cakethief of the Merry Mootmen Halfling team upon his mismatched and fiendishly-sharp horns. The incident rapidly spirals out of control when Shardhorn refuses to remove the unfortunate Halfling, who he is proudly wearing like a hat, much to the protestations of the officials. Mootmen fans invade the pitch and a riot is narrowly avoided.

2476 Shardhorn and the Destroyers enjoy their most successful season to date, earning glory in the AFC North Conference Third Division, and placing well in several provincial tournaments. Shardhorn is rewarded

with bountiful gifts by Grandfather Nurgle, his already hideous visage beginning to split apart along its length. Other team members are blessed with more virulent ailments to treasure and share with others. Sadly, the increased contamination risks halt the Destroyers' rise through the ranks as they are forbidden from entering a higher division!

2487 In town following the Blood Bowl Championship, the Destroyers take a tour of the famous Old Bowl, home of the Reikland Reavers, and view their renowned trophy room. Whilst there, Shardhorn's truly obnoxious aroma causes problems when the Blood Bowl trophy begins to tarnish in his presence! Thrown out by security, Shardhorn is sanctioned by the

NAF for damaging the sport's most famous cup, beginning a feud with the Altdorf Master Jewellers' Guild that rages to this day.

2493 Shardhorn decides to go it alone on the growing freebooter market that has sprung up since the collapse of the NAF, having received offers from several Nurgle-aligned teams wishing to hire him. It isn't the wisest move though as many other potential employers are put off by his appearance, smell and many contagious diseases. His luck changes for the better when he signs on with a new manager, Iwan McCluud, who cunningly invests in shares in Tick-Be-Gone sheep dip.

* An unproven counter-allegation made by Shardhorn and his representatives is that the gold on the trophy clearly isn't pure gold but a cheap imitation.

STAR PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

TOLLY GLOCKLINGER, THE CARRION LORD'S CARILLON

We've seen many strange players take to the pitch in the name of the Plaguefather down the years. From those who appear almost normal, hiding a virulent contagion behind an innocuous visage, to the gruesome Bloaters, huge and warped with mutation and disease. Not to mention the hideous Rotspawn (Please, let's not mention the hideous Rotspawn - Ed)! Amongst this cavalcade of curiosities, one player has come to stand out in recent years, famed for his ever increasing girth as much as his peculiar playstyle and penchant for illegal apparatus.



Come with us once more into the locker room as we discover the origins of Tolly Glocklinger – circus strongman, enthusiastic campanologist and a fine figure of a Blood Bowl player!

Tolly Glocklinger grew up around circus folk, travelling the highways and byways of the Empire as part of the Cirque de Bilité Travelling Show, bringing joy to the towns they passed through and entertaining the merry masses. Tolly was the only son of the resident strongman and his lovely bride, the so-called Bearded Beauty of Brunnwald. It was a happy childhood, always on the road, always seeing new places, always leaving town before dawn with wagons full of stolen goods. All the circus folk loved Tolly, and his proud father would often proclaim that in time his son would be the strongest of strongmen ever to lift a dumbbell!

But there was more to Tolly than his prodigious size; he was ever a musical child, drawn to the circus musicians. His particular love was for the art of campanology, and he was an eager student of the old bellringer, 'Deaf' Johann, who had been with the circus longer than any could remember. From him Tolly learned his art, and as he grew bigger and stronger his father struck upon a fine idea. The young Tolly joined his father in the ring, performing feats of strength to amaze the crowds. But Tolly brought a new element to the role. Rather than simply performing with weights, he would play his custom-made giant bells, producing surprisingly beautiful melodies even as he hefted the most incredible weights!

Quite when the Rot set in is hard to know, but at some point the Cirque de Bilité Travelling Show had become more than it seemed at first sight. The players and performers hid a dark secret, for they were cultists of Nurgle, spreading plagues and virulence in their wake across

the lands. As Tolly continued to mature, so too did he continue to change, blessed as he was by his secret patron. His girth expanded, his skin stretched and ruptured. In time, he was as disease-ridden and foul as his fellows, hiding his vileness behind the bright greasepaint and tawdry costumes.

Tolly's career crossed paths with Blood Bowl when, over the two week course of a small provincial tournament in Stirland, the Cirque de Bilité performances on the sidelines proved a big hit with the fans, and as the final stages drew near, plague ran rampant through the small town. The infectious excitement of the spectacle of Blood Bowl and circus troupe combined was noted by many of the Cabalvision networks and sports promoters, even as the chaotic nature of the performers was carefully ignored. Within weeks, such sideline shows had become quite the norm, paving the way for the spectacular half-time shows that are commonplace today!

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2471 The Cirque de Bilité Travelling Show is invited to perform alongside a small Blood Bowl tournament in the province of Stirland. The first time Tolly and his folk witness Blood Bowl, as fate would have it, involves the relatively new Plaguebearers. Tolly is hooked, and when the tournament is over and the town satisfactorily infected with plague, the circus and the Plaguebearers take to the road once more, together forming a most merry band of Blood Bowl players and sideline performers.

2474 The young Tolly makes his debut playing for the Plaguebearers, after several key players begin to fall apart!

The gigantic circus strongman drags his beloved bells onto the pitch with him, much to the protestations of the officials. During the course of the first half, no fewer than seven opposition players are stretchered off as a result of run-ins with Tolly's heavy bells, and in spite of his being sent off at half-time, he earns a lasting position in the squad.

2485 The Plaguebearers squad is welcomed into the NAF AFC Central Conference following several seasons of rapid and virulent growth. However, not all are so welcoming. Several long-standing teams within the division refuse to play against them, and more than a few stadiums refuse

to act as host. In spite of several strong showings, the team suffers a disappointing end to their season, refused entry to the play-offs and relegated to an outlying division once more due to 'health concerns'.

2491 Following the collapse of the NAF, the Plaguebearers adapt very well, returning to their roots as a travelling band, entering numerous tournaments and entertaining many fans. Tolly records his best season to date, performing an instrumental role (I see what you did there! – Ed) in their memorable wins in both the Worlds Edge League and the Batter Bowl.

GLITTERING PRIZES

Since the collapse of the NAF, the face of our beloved sport has changed immeasurably, and continues to do so almost weekly. Leagues spring up and many burn brightly for a few seasons before collapsing under the weight of bureaucracy. Tournaments happen all around the world all the time, many becoming mainstays of the sporting calendar, many more remaining small, local affairs. Join us as we delve into the recent history and changing face of the great game, and take a closer look at many of the minor leagues and tournaments that have, in recent years, become regular fixtures!

DID YOU KNOW...

During a match between the Swamptide Squeelers and the Plaguebearers, the Goblin players were inspired by Tolly Glocklinger's unique method of getting his 'bells' onto the pitch and at half-time attempted to hide weapons in their guts – much to the irritation of their coach who walked into the dugout at the start of the second half to find his entire team dead on the floor!

For a time following the collapse of the NAF, there were no tournaments or competitions at all. Teams simply played one-off games for whatever prizes they could arrange. Normally, these were promoted by stadium owners and player agents, the former having purchased a stadium for a steal from the collapsed and disgraced NAF and desperate to recoup some cash, the latter struggling to justify their fees in the post-NAF world and eager to prove to their clients that they were doing a fine job. Commonly, the proceeds of ticket sales on the gate would be split between these organisers and the prize pot available for the teams.

Many professional teams were reduced to travelling the Old World like bands of mercenaries. Coaches and players were goaded and guided by agents, accepted or issued challenges to other such teams when the opportunity arose, and made ends meet from the meagre winnings available for performing for the crowds they could attract.

Then came the 'pot hunters', brutal professional teams cut loose from the strict conduct codes of the NAF, issuing friendly challenges to local amateur outfits for exhibition matches, an activity which invariably drew a large home crowd. Many an eager amateur team received a brutal mauling in this way, when it only became apparent mid-game that the professionals were less interested in a fun spectacle and friendly competition than they were in an easy win and collecting the prize at whatever the cost to their opponents. It was a dark time for the sport and many fans became disenfranchised after witnessing a brutal no-contest game, having parted with a substantial sum to secure a ticket.

It was not long, however, before the Cabalvision networks and major sponsors who had supported the NAF got together and started arranging more formal tournaments, with large prizes for the teams that managed to battle their way through to the final stages. They had seen the way the sport was deteriorating and sought to make changes for the better – or so they claimed in press conferences. In truth, they had seen stadium owners getting rich from their large share of the ticket sales and concession stand income, and had struck upon a way to get their share. In this brave new world, free from the governance of the NAF and their rules on sponsorship, promotion and the way competitions should be structured, new ways were quickly being discovered to make a fast buck at the expense of the fans and the players.

The stadium owners were delighted, as hosting a tournament meant several games taking place in quick succession rather than one every few weeks, even months, and the trouble of promotion and advertising fell to someone else. Fans flooded back to witness teams of a similar calibre compete on an equal footing, delighted that the spectacle had returned. Teams were lured in by the prospect of much bigger payouts than were available on the open road and in provincial matches. Everyone was a winner.

Four championship tournaments quickly established themselves as the most important and eagerly anticipated events of the year, founded as they were by big names of the sport and with considerable financial and political clout behind them, and through following a simple format of inviting some of the best teams on the circuit to compete over several rounds to determine the winner. They were soon being referred to as

the 'Major Tournaments' or more simply, the 'Majors'.

These tournaments are held at roughly three monthly intervals across the year. The first is the All Comers Chaos Cup in spring, a lively affair that is never held in the same location twice and often includes some of the mightiest Chaos teams campaigning in the Realm of Chaos. Then there is the Blood Bowl Classic, a truly grand affair with the finals held at the huge Emperor Luitpold I Stadium in the Imperial city of Altdorf at the height of summer. Thirdly, there's the *Spike! Magazine* Trophy Open each autumn, the finals held in the Estalian city of Magritta on the bay of Gaia de Quetunde, renowned as the wildest party city the world over (Well, it has been since that comet landed on Mordheim – Ed). Lastly, there's the Dungeonbowl Invitational, hosted and sponsored by the Colleges of Magic, played in a series of dungeons during the cold months of winter. In addition to their very different formats, these tournaments are very diverse, geographically speaking, ensuring as much mass appeal as is possible. Wherever a sports fan lives in the world, there is a Major they can hope to attend in person at least once in their lifetime.

These are by no means the only tournaments that exist; many more have sprung up across the Old World and beyond. Some become staples of the calendar, returning year after year and attracting teams from far and wide. Others are one-off events, that for whatever reason fail to gain the traction to return the following year. Whilst others are held every few years in a regular cycle.

BLOOD BOWL LEAGUE TOURNAMENTS

Watching teams grow, develop and seeing rookie players blossom into mighty Star Players in their own right. Building upon your team's background and rivalries with others – all the while hoping to do well, hoping to win lasting fame and fortune – playing in a Blood Bowl league is great fun!

In truth, although we call them leagues, what our teams are most likely doing is participating in the type of tournaments that happen around the Old World and beyond all the time. There haven't been many formal leagues since the NAF collapsed, and teams travel the known world taking part in numerous privately run tournaments, playing a series of linked games, hoping to qualify for the finals and to win the prizes on offer. The development seen is a team improving through the course of such a competition and becoming a more skilled and complete unit. Over several such league seasons, a team will have played in several different competitions in very different locations, gained new players, lost old favourites, and changed and evolved over time.

What this section hopes to do is to present some alternatives to the standard way in which a season ends, some ways to recreate famous competitions and to capture the thrill of playing for a more exciting or prestigious trophy, hopefully to enable coaches to better explore the nature of the game, the world, and the teams in their collections. The Tournaments named here contain various prize pots or inducements unique to them, which coaches and League Commissioners are encouraged to try out.

The rules for post-season Tournaments are quite simple; they work with the standard league rules presented in the *Inaugural Blood Bowl Almanac* or *Death Zone Season One!*, where a Tournament will be played over several rounds, often hosted by different stadiums in the same region. They are suggested to make the prizes teams compete for or the games they play a bit more interesting and to add an extra layer of background and character to accompany the events that take place on the tabletop, and perhaps to encourage League Commissioners and coaches to try something different and send their league off with a bang! How the league itself is organised; number of teams, how many divisions there are, how many rounds are played, are all things decided upon by the League Commissioner based upon what is best for the coaches participating.

ORCIDAS TEAM OF THE YEAR

For as long as anyone can remember, Orcidas has been the name in sportswear across the known world – a staggering achievement for a firm of greenskin tailors originating from the Badlands. Yet Orcidas has always had its gnarled talon firmly on the thrumming pulse of what sports players and fans want – durability and comfort delivered in a smart, casual style. The fact that they cannot seem to get the waistband right on a pair of pants, or figure out where on the leg the crotch should hang, is strangely a matter of some pride amongst their loyal customers.

Every year, Orcidas proudly sponsors a tournament held in Blackfire Pass, with teams and fans from far and wide coming to see the action, along with the launch of the next season's styles.

PRIZES

In addition to the standard winnings available at the end of a league season, the team that wins the cup may give one randomly determined player a +1AV increase, to represent their coming away from the Orcidas Team of the Year Tournament with splendid new kit made in the hard-wearing traditions of Orc couture.

The Elven Luckstone Award



ABC (Associated Broadcasting Conjurers) Cup



THE ELVEN LUCKSTONE AWARD

Every year, teams from around the world travel to Hoeth, in Ulthuan, to compete for the Elven Luckstone Award. This deeply magical trophy, created by the Loremasters of Hoeth who take great pride in sponsoring the event, takes the form of a fabulous crystal plaque. Engraved with the finest calligraphy, it sparkles with supernatural energies and enthrals all who see it first-hand. It is said to grant good fortune to the team that holds it, and many teams can bear witness to this, their fortunes following winning the award invariably taking a turn for the better.

SPECIAL RULES

During the end of season play-off semi-finals and finals games, one player on each team will be touched by the greatness of the Luckstone. Randomly select one player from each team. That player gains the Pro skill for the duration of the match. If that player already has the Pro or Loner skill, randomly select another player.

PRIZES

Alongside the standard financial bonuses for winning or placing in the league, the winning team gains an additional team re-roll for the duration of the next standard league season they play in. This re-roll does not cost the team any gold pieces but does increase their Team Value.

Additionally, the player on the winning team who was awarded the MVP for the final match gains the Pro skill – increase their cost accordingly. If the MVP already has the Pro or Loner skill, randomly select another player to gain the Pro skill.



Orkias Team of the Year

ABC (ASSOCIATED BROADCASTING CONJURERS) CUP

ABC is one of the longest running Cabalvision networks, popular with home viewers for its heady mix of sports coverage, light entertainment, programming for younger viewers, and exclusive access to gala events and celebrity awards ceremonies.

It truly is quite awful!

ABC hosts its own tournament annually in Nuln, the city made famous by its Engineering school and its young, limelight-loving Elector Countess, Emmanuelle von Liebwitz. It is always a star studded affair, with many red carpet appearances from sports stars and famous personages of the various arts popular in the Old World, from playwrights and poets to wandering players and troubadours. The fans tune in in huge numbers to see who's who and who they're with in the VIP boxes.

SPECIAL RULES FOR THE ABC CUP

During the end of season play-off semi-finals and finals games, the team that wins the FAME will count as having that many extra Cheerleaders during that game (+1 or +2), to represent the additional support they gain from fair weather fans impressed by seeing the players rubbing shoulders with celebrities.

PRIZES

As well as the standard financial bonuses for winning or placing in the league, the winning team will gain a bonus +1 FAME, up to a maximum of +3, for the first D3 games of the next standard league season they play in, representing a flood of new fans who quickly lose interest once normal campaigning is resumed and celebrity gossip dries up. Make a note of this on the team's roster.

DID YOU KNOW...

Prior to finding a home with the Diseased Destroyers, Bilerot Vomitflesh played as part of many teams, amongst them several Chaos Chosen squads aligned to other patrons. One such brief internship was with the Sibilant Serpents, a team of players dedicated to the Chaos god Slaanesh. Sadly, he was quickly expelled by the team's coach when it became apparent that he looked ridiculous in the Serpents' very distinctive team kit!

OF HORTICULTURE AND UNHEALTHY HERBOLOGY

Continuing our recent series exposing the unsung sideline heroes of the game, this month, we here at *Spike! Journal* have donned our sturdy boots and equipped ourselves with shovel and secateurs to venture outdoors, meeting the strange groundskeepers who toil to maintain the effluent and unearthly splendour of those rare stadiums dedicated to Grandfather Nurgie.

But that's not all. Infected with a relentless urge to learn more, we've been looking at the strange practices of the Plague Doctors that tend to Nurgie's teams. We've even taken a look at the teeming masses of Nurgling assistants that invariably swarm around the coaching staff and perform alongside the cheerleaders!

DID YOU KNOW...

Nurgie Garden Salads, sold at stadiums across the Old World, are responsible for about half of all Blood Bowl food-related illnesses – and that's just the way Nurgie fans like it!



Nurgl teams have a long history of finding it hard to secure fixtures. Obviously there is the ever-present problem of many other squads being unwilling to take to the pitch with them, wary of contagion and the long term ill-effects that brings. But more than that, it is not uncommon for stadium owners and sponsors to baulk at the idea of hosting a Nurgle team, as well as the strict rules many towns and provinces place upon them in the form of quarantine orders, to protect the hordes of fans.

At first glance, this may appear needlessly restrictive, but upon closer inspection it really isn't surprising! Nurgle teams are known for far more than just the diseased nature of their players. They tend to be accompanied by many unusual staff. Their own strange horticulturalists travel with them, often interfering with the resident groundskeepers' work and having a lasting impact upon the quality of the turf for decades to come. On the sidelines, Nurglings run riot, causing all manner of mischief to the well-ordered running of a stadium, whilst Plague Doctors prowl the Dugouts and infirmaries, offering their unique expertise and corrupting the good work of others.



NEW INDUCEMENTS

Plague Doctors, Cavorting Nurglings and Horticulturalists of Nurgle may be Induced by any of the teams listed in their entries that follow.

The Plague Doctor fulfils a similar role to that of an Apothecary on other teams, whilst a Horticulturalist of Nurgle is a type of Wizard.

It is important to note that the use of Inducements varies between leagues and Tournaments, and coaches should read the rules pack or ask the League Commissioner/Tournament organisers if they are unsure. In Exhibition Matches, players should decide between themselves which Inducements will be included and which will not.

PLAQUE DOCTORS

(100,000 GOLD PIECES)

AVAILABLE TO CHAOS RENEGADES AND NURGLE TEAMS

Plague Doctors are strange figures swathed in leather robes stained and heavy with the noxious discharges of their patients, their faces hidden behind long-nosed masks beneath the shadow of wide brimmed hats and their arms concealed to the shoulder by filthy gloves. The Plague Doctors that accompany Nurgle teams are well-versed in the care of the many virulent plagues and ailments that infect their charges. They haunt the dark corners of the stadiums their teams visit, looming from the shadows to assist the most unfortunate of players, officials and fans alike...

Once per game, a Plague Doctor may be used to re-roll one failed Regeneration roll for a player on your team. Alternatively, once per match the Plague Doctor may be used when a player on your team is KO'd. If the player was on the pitch when KO'd, leave them on the pitch Stunned rather than removing them from the pitch. If the player was KO'd as a result of being pushed into the crowd, place them directly into the Reserves box rather than the KO'd Players box.

CAVORTING NURGLINGS

(40,000 GOLD PIECES)

AVAILABLE TO NURGLE TEAMS

It is most common for the followers of Nurgle to be accompanied by swarms of Nurglings, tiny daemonic representations of Nurgle himself that appear strangely able to project themselves into the mortal realm in great numbers wherever the Plague Father's followers tread. These mischievous sprites cause no end of trouble wherever Nurgle teams appear. Their antics have a huge appeal to the fans of the game, who delight in their morbid, slapstick comedy on the sidelines and their constant interference with officials and opposition teams.

A Nurgle team accompanied by a swarm of Cavorting Nurglings on the sidelines will automatically gain a +1 FAME modifier at the beginning of the match. Note that this modifier may not take the team above +2 FAME.

HORTICULTURALIST OF NURGLE

(150,000 GOLD PIECES)

AVAILABLE TO CHAOS CHOSEN,

CHAOS RENEGADES AND NURGLE TEAMS

Despite the diseased and decayed appearance of his many followers, Grandfather Nurgle is a god of life. Wherever his followers travel, a gruesome flourishing of fresh life follows, be it squirming maggots, worms and buzzing clouds of flies, or the vigorous growth of strange flora from the swelling earth. Stadiums dedicated to Nurgle are particularly worrisome, for even as the walls and stands rot and decay, the sacred pitch writhes with life, the soil churning and bulging as peculiar plants burst forth, before rotting away in a moment, consumed by tiny creatures that themselves live for mere moments before expiring to fertilise fresh plant growth. It is not uncommon for the Horticulturalists who tend these strange pitches to travel with their teams, spreading their unique knowledge to other grounds and bringing with them the seeds of Nurgle's garden to sow in the mortal world. Unsurprisingly, such fellows, jolly though they invariably are, are extremely unpopular with the groundsmen of the Old World, and many times the NAF and other bodies have attempted to impose strict rules that would prevent their interference!

A Horticulturalist of Nurgle is a Wizard Inducement, available for purchase during the Pre-match sequence of league play and Exhibition Matches. No team may hire more than one Wizard per match – note here that Horatio X. Schottenheim is a Wizard. All Wizards are (In)Famous Coaching Staff, and hiring a Wizard will take up one of the 0-2 (In)Famous Coaching Staff permitted. Wizards other than Horatio X. Schottenheim, however, are not named characters, and there is no restriction on both teams fielding the same type.

Wizards should be represented in games with a suitable model on the sidelines, both for the look of the thing and to act as a reminder that a Wizard stands ready and waiting to help out! All Wizards can be used once per game to cast one spell from their repertoire in either the first or the second half, but not both. Once the Wizard has been used, remove the model.

VIGOROUS GROWTH: Cast at the start of any of your opponent's turns, before any player performs an Action. For the duration of this turn, opposition players suffer a -2 modifier to dice rolls when making Go For It attempts, as the turf of the pitch erupts with unclean life.

Note that this modifier applies alongside Weather conditions or any other factors that may alter the outcome of a Go For It. For example, in normal weather conditions, whilst affected by Vigorous Growth, a player will fail a Go For It on a roll of a 1, 2 or 3, whereas in Blizzard conditions and whilst affected by Vigorous Growth, they will fail on a roll of a 1, 2, 3 or 4.

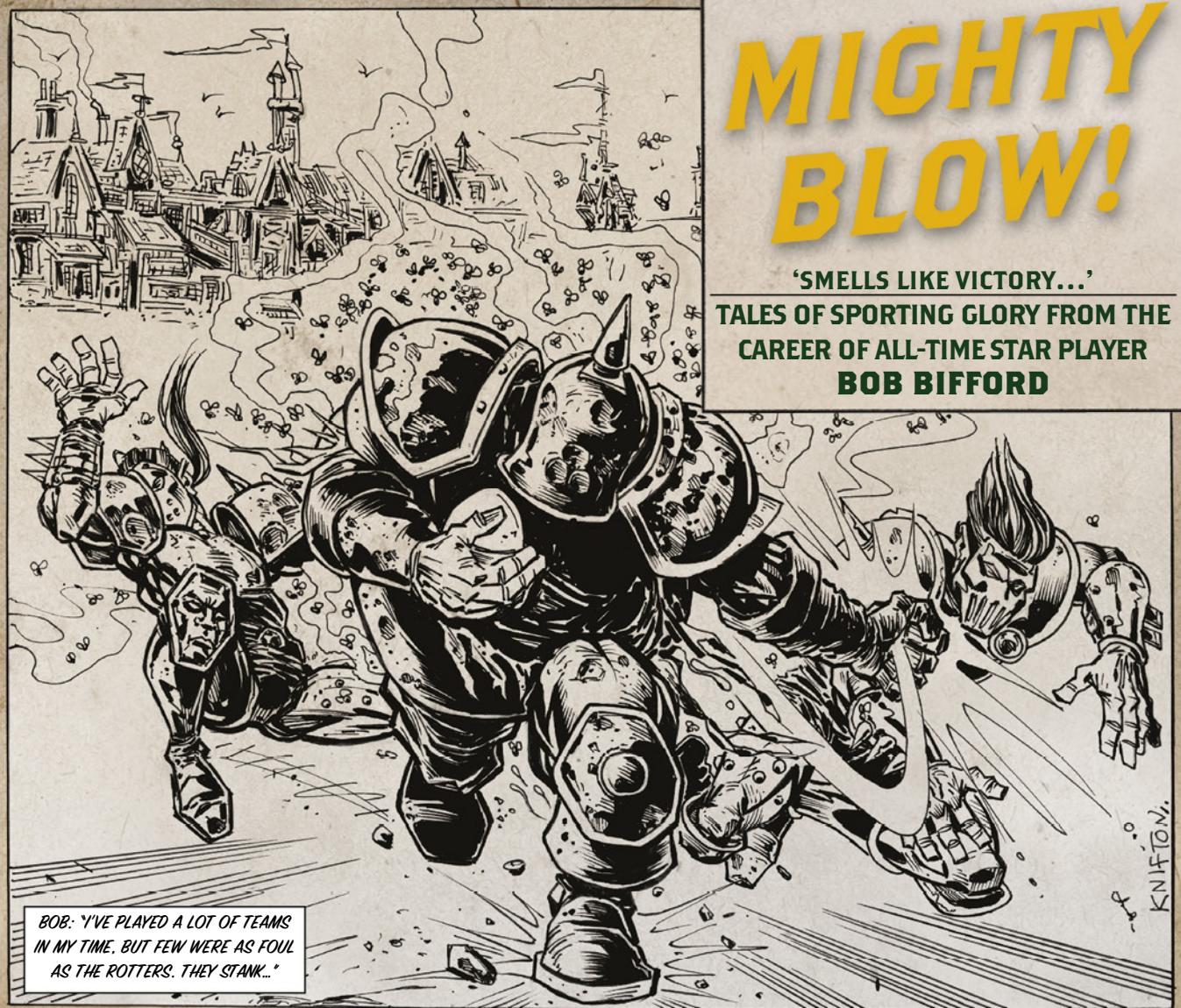
STRANGE FAUNA: Cast either at the start of any of your turns, before any player performs an Action, or immediately after your turn has ended, even if it ended with a turnover. Choose an empty target square anywhere on the pitch. Choose D3 opposition players within two squares of the target square, and roll a D6 for each to see if that player is hit. If the score is a 4 or higher, the player is unexpectedly attacked by daemonic carnivorous plants of prodigious size that erupt from the loamy earth before rapidly rotting away to nothing. The player is Knocked Down. If it is a 3 or less, the player manages to avoid the attacking plant life. Make an Armour roll (and possible Injury roll as well) for any player that is Knocked Down, as if they had been Knocked Down by a player with the Mighty Blow and Nurgle's Rot skills.



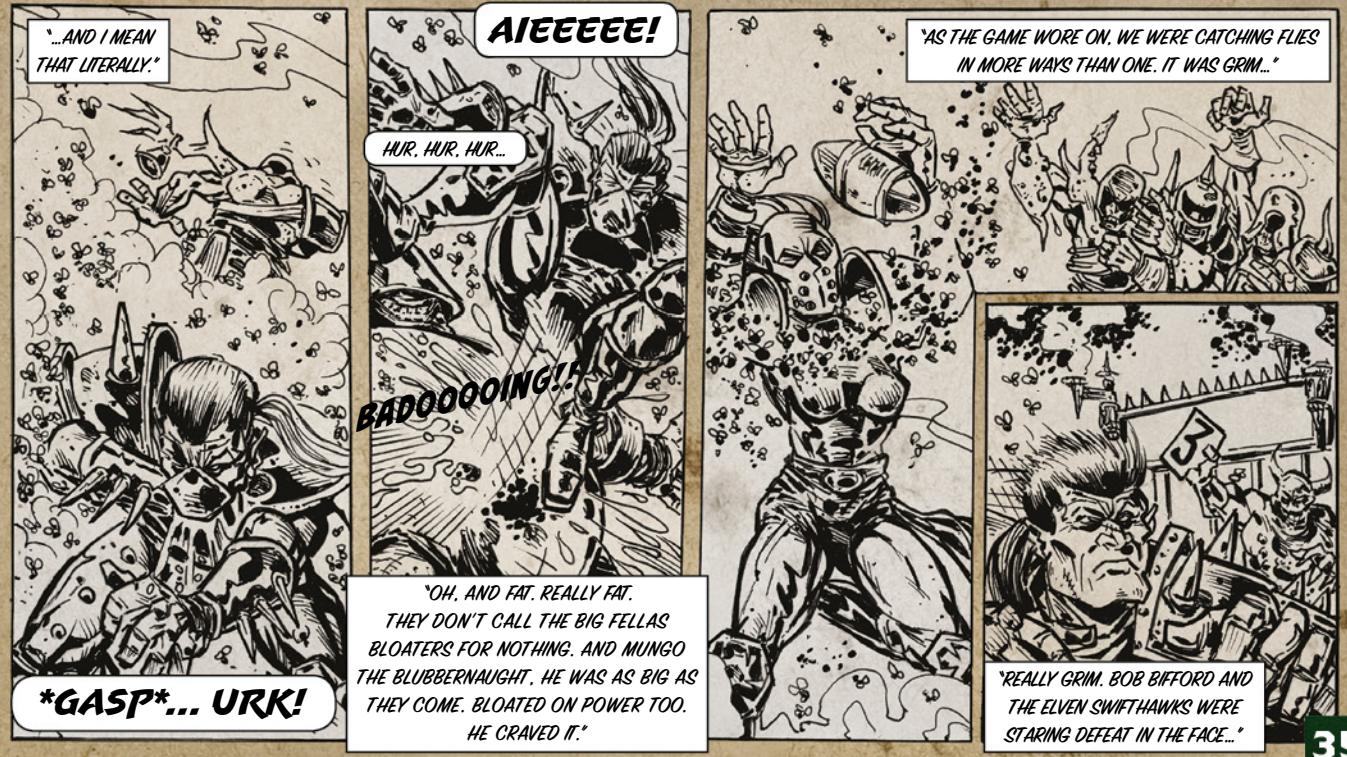
MIGHTY BLOW!

'SMELLS LIKE VICTORY...'

TALES OF SPORTING GLORY FROM THE CAREER OF ALL-TIME STAR PLAYER BOB BIFFORD



BOB: "I'VE PLAYED A LOT OF TEAMS IN MY TIME, BUT FEW WERE AS FOUL AS THE ROTTERS. THEY STANK..."



GASP... URK!

'OH, AND FAT. REALLY FAT. THEY DON'T CALL THE BIG FELLA'S BLOATERS FOR NOTHING. AND MUNGO THE BLUBBERNAUGHT, HE WAS AS BIG AS THEY COME. BLOATED ON POWER TOO. HE CRAVED IT.'

'REALLY GRIM. BOB BIFFORD AND THE ELVEN SWIFTHAWKS WERE STARING DEFEAT IN THE FACE...'

"MOST OF THE ROTTERS WERE JUST SKIN, BONE AND BUBOES, AND THE SWIFTHAWKS HAD REAL GUTS..."



"...IT'S JUST THAT THE BLUBBERNAUGHT'S WERE BIGGER. A LOT BIGGER. SWOLLEN ON POWER. IT WAS NEVER ENOUGH."



"NATURALLY, HE CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF A TALENT SCOUT."



"A GIFT FROM THE GODS..."



"...AND WITH NO RETURNS, UNFORTUNATELY FOR MUNGO. FROM BLOATER TO ROTSPAWN IN SEVEN SECONDS."

BLEEEUGH!

*BLLEEEET!

"I TOOK ADVANTAGE, OF COURSE, AS THE ROTTERS FELL APART, AGAIN, LITERALLY. WE SCORED FREELY AFTER THAT."

"IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY... BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR."



FEZRILITH GOOM
ROTTER, NURGLE'S ROTTERS



'MERRY' APOGNOSIS
ROTTER, NURGLE'S ROTTERS



SLARM RUNNELSORE
ROTTER, NURGLE'S ROTTERS



HERPERITUS INFECTUS
ROTTER, NURGLE'S ROTTERS



PHOXUS 'THE NOXIOUS'
BLOATER, NURGLE'S ROTTERS



BA'GOM 'BROWN BRITCHES'
ROTTER, NURGLE'S ROTTERS



ROGAER VON RATLINGER
ROTTER, NURGLE'S ROTTERS



PLIGIS THE PUSTULENT
PESTIGOR, NURGLE'S ROTTERS



ERESOUR ERNTE
BLOATER, NURGLE'S ROTTERS

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