

BLOOD BOWL®

SPIKE!

THE FANTASY FOOTBALL JOURNAL

ISSUE
06



THE FAE AND THE FURIOUS!
WOOD ELVES DANCE ONTO THE PITCH!

PACKED
FULL OF PIXIES
AND BUTTERFLIES!

WONDROUS WOOD ELVES!
DISCOVER THE STAR PLAYERS OF ATHEL LOREN!

ISSUE SIX!

EVEN MORE OFFICIAL CONTENT FOR THE GAME OF FANTASY FOOTBALL



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WELCOME BACK SPORTS FANS

Welcome to the wild yet picturesque pages of *Spike! Journal* as we go down to the woods today and reveal a whole host of surprises. From enchanting Wardancers to towering Treemen, we dig up all the dirt on these acrobatic athletes in an issue so full of facts, it's fertile ground for growing a fresh crop of fanatical Wood Elf fans!

If ever there was a team that was 'too talented' for Blood Bowl then it is the Wood Elves. Don't believe those who would tell you that Blood Bowl is just a game of breaking bones and pushing in faces! Even so-called 'all-rounders' will often say that the best way to win is to leave the mangled remains of the opposition scattered about the pitch and then 'walk it in'. Teams only say that because they lack the fundamental skills to actually play the game as laid down in the sacred texts of Nuffle!

The first Wood Elf teams to play the great game quickly mastered the art of it, only pausing momentarily to wonder why most of the other teams they met spent all their time kicking and punching each other when the ball was right there at their feet. Of course, this is not to say the denizens of Athel Loren are above snapping the odd spine if they have to – they can't let the Dark Elves have all the fun after all!

To the Wood Elves a game of Blood Bowl is akin to the ancient ritual of the hunt; the opposing team are viewed as rival predators, the ball their mutual prey. Tapping into skills honed by centuries of stalking through the wild woods of their homeland, the Wood Elves close in

on the ball from all sides. Once the prey is in hand, the Elves spirit it away from anyone who would take it from them, and all of this is done so fast that all the opposition can do is watch the distant outline of a Wood Elf planting the ball in the End Zone.

Join us then to find out more about such players as Jordell Freshbreeze and Gloriel Summerbloom, as well as some of the stranger denizens of the deep woods, such as Swiftvine Glimmershard and the near-mythical Zolcath the Zoat! Delight at the exploits of Bob Bifford as related by the teller of tall tales, Nick 'Grimm-Dark' Kyme and illuminated by the talented Pete 'Flower-Power' Knifton! Read all about the Athelorn Avengers and their troubles with the Darkside Cowboys messing up their plans!

Come with us, readers, as we skip along the twisting pathways of magical Athel Loren and straight into the loving embrace of a Treeman...



L. Ron Elfman,
Guest Editor *Spike! Magazine*

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WOODLAND WONDERLAND



DID YOU KNOW...

The Treetop Terrors once built their own stadium in the upper branches of their forest home. It collapsed during its first game when Nasher Snotrun protested his 'unfair' sending off by turning his chainsaw upon the trees holding the stadium aloft!

This month *Spike! Journal* continues its tour of the Old World's natural wonders. Following our recent sojourn to the rural idyll of the Halfling Moot, our senior writing staff were smitten with the sights and sounds of the Altern Forest. Keen for our less experienced writers to get out of the office and take in more of nature's bounty, we thought the time was right for them to make the long pilgrimage south in search of the mythical arboreal wonderland of Athel Loren. We had been made most welcome within the Altern, and our publishers assured us that Athel Loren was no different and that it'd be a fine learning experience for our apprentices! They were not entirely wrong...

Athel Loren is one of the largest forests in all the known world, yet it remains largely unexplored by outsiders – a mysterious realm that hides its many secrets under gloomy boughs. Travellers rarely set foot within its borders, and those that do seem destined to vanish in mysterious circumstances. This struck us at *Spike! Journal* as odd. We've all seen Wood Elf teams playing Blood Bowl; fair of hair, pale of skin and graceful of limb. They seem the very exemplars of noble, Elven values. Of course, appearances can be deceiving...

The Asrai (as Wood Elves call themselves – *Ed*) are not so similar to their High Elf kin as they first appear, the wild and primal realm of Athel Loren having been separated from the sophisticates of Ulthuan for millennia. Legend tells that, aeons ago, there was a great war between Elven kind and the Dwarfs of the Worlds Edge Mountains. This war caused the Elves to abandon their many wondrous cities and colonies the world over as they retreated to Ulthuan. The Asrai however chose to remain within Athel Loren. They had dwelt within this deeply magical domain for many centuries, shaping it to their will, and in turn living side-by-side with magical beings in this realm of ancient gods had wrought strange changes upon the Asrai. They had become more in tune with the primordial wonders of the natural world, setting aside the high towers and shining cities of their kin and living as one with nature. In turn they had also become insular and distant, highly protective of their home and the mythical beings they shared it with.

In short, they became strange, fey creatures, sharing the culture of their kin in only the broadest of senses. And yet, for all these differences, the Wood Elves are still Elves. For many years, teams from Athel Loren competed within the secretive Elven leagues alongside the folk of Ulthuan and Naggaroth. Travelling along otherworldly forest paths, they played many fixtures in distant lands. Not unlike the experience of the Druchii, for many years the wider sporting world either didn't know or didn't bother to find out what set the Asrai apart. It wasn't until the Darkside Cowboys debuted on the world stage that sports fans started paying closer attention to the many and diverse teams within the Elven leagues, and noticing that not all teams competing were cut from the same dull Elven cloth...

Soon, teams originating from Athel Loren were appearing in other competitions and attracting huge fan followings. Their primitive, fey appearance belying a savagery not often seen in other Elven teams; their speed, grace and athleticism an entertaining counterpoint to the pompous posturing of the High Elves and the inventive cruelty of the Dark Elves.

WOOD ELVES (THE LINEMEN)

Traditionally within Athel Loren, when an Elf comes of age, he or she will be charged with keeping safe a section of their forest. These days, whilst essential security work still keeps many an Elf in gainful employment, apprehending trespassers and keeping the borders secure, ever increasing numbers of young Elves are drawn to a career in Blood Bowl – Wood Elves make wonderful players, being naturally gifted with grace and speed. Consequently, coaches are often spoilt for choice when recruiting new players, enabling Asrai teams to operate the most stringent and rigorous of selection processes, and weeding out the unworthy at an early stage.

THROWERS

Wood Elves, like their kin from Ulthuan, delight in what they consider to be 'classically correct' Blood Bowl. They rely upon a strong passing game, rushing Catchers forward to receive a perfect pass, before advancing on the opposition's End Zone with alarming speed. As a result, teams from Athel Loren place huge importance on their Throwers, dedicating many hours to training skilled players in the fine art of the long pass. This should come as no surprise, for Elves of all types have long been renowned for their love of archery. In the past, young Asrai would spend their days practicing their skill with bow and arrow in the wide open archery fields of Athel Loren. Today those same meadow glades echo with the shouts of young Blood Bowl players perfecting their art rather than the twang of bowstrings and zip of loosed arrows.

CATCHERS

Over many millennia living within the depths of Athel Loren, the Asrai have adapted to this otherworldly realm in many ways, and its strange, magical properties have worked upon them in return. Consequently, many Wood Elves exhibit attributes associated with their gods, Kurnous the Hunter, and Isha, the Maiden. Those particularly blessed by Isha are marked by a grace and speed unusual even amongst a race renowned for such qualities as grace and speed. Those Asrai Blood Bowl players that fulfil the role of Catcher are often less physically strong than others of their kind, but their preternatural agility more than makes up for this. Slender and elegant, these players put many in mind of the tiny birds of the forest that flit from flower to flower faster than the eye can see to sip nectar from Summer blossoms.

WARDANCERS

While the followers of Isha worship the beauty and grace of the natural world, others seek to embody the furious hostility of nature. These individuals are hunters and predators, revelling in the thrill of the chase and the exhilaration of the kill. Wardancers are the most devout followers of this aspect. Ordained at an early age into their calling, they learn strange and mystical dances and rituals that convey the wildest aspects of nature. In ages past, Wardancers were fearsome warriors, fast, deadly and fierce of countenance. Today, many of these wild Elves flock to the Blood Bowl pitch, their dazzling acrobatics and fearsome fighting abilities making them greatly sought after as players. Many an opponent has learned to dread the sight of their wild hair and complex tattoos, knowing all too well that even the best defence poses little hindrance to such skilled players.

TREEMEN

Athel Loren is an enchanted realm – a forest as old as time, saturated by magic and the last safe haven of ancient gods and supernatural beings. It's no wonder then that even the trees are a bit odd! Most Blood Bowl fans' only experience of Treemen is of those that habitually play for Halfling teams, and many assume that the Treemen of Athel Loren are no different. But this could not be further from the truth! Where the Treemen of the Altern Forest are friendly and outgoing, not unlike their Halfling neighbours, those of Athel Loren are far more solitary and aloof, shunning others almost entirely. Indeed, to see a Treeman taking to the pitch for a Wood Elf team is still remarkably rare, and when they do join a squad, many pundits question the role of these sedentary behemoths among such a fast and agile team. To the Treemen of Athel Loren however, such signings have a deep logic, rooted (*Ha! – Ed*) in their spiritualistic nature and grim, protective ways. For the Treemen of Athel Loren, playing Blood Bowl facilitates their desire to see outsiders and interlopers squashed underfoot. Consequently, when these mighty creatures take to the pitch, the fans can be sure of one thing: that the line of scrimmage will host a most violent spectacle!



DID YOU KNOW...

Wood Elf stadiums used to only offer vegetarian meal options to fans. This policy was finally revoked in 2485 when every Arranoc Drakes player was eaten by the hungry Oldheim Ogres fans at half-time!



FAMOUS WOOD ELF TEAMS

THE BIL BALI ARCHERS

A team of Asrai expatriates from Athel Loren, the Bil Bali Archers were formed in the warm, wooded hills of northern Estalia. No one is really sure why a Wood Elf commune is to be found so far from their homeland, but the pleasant weather of the region combined with the local diet of seafood and strong wine certainly seems to agree with the Elves! For many years, the Archers were known more for the lyrical skills of their fans than the sporting abilities of their players. One game at a time however, the Archers have turned their fortunes around, largely thanks to the lilting tones of their adoring fans inspiring them to ever more spectacular victories.

THE PINE CRAG PIONEERS

Hailing from Wydrioth, where Athel Loren meets the Grey Mountains, the Pioneers are one of the more combative Asrai teams. Having travelled far and wide in the lands of men for several decades now, the Pioneers have become prominent competitors in many leagues and tournaments across the south of the Empire. Combining the natural speed and skill of the Asrai with the natural toughness folk from their mountainous region are renowned for within Athel Loren, the Pioneers are best known for bringing the fight to their opponents. And bring it they certainly do! Where other Wood Elves rely on speed and skill, the Pioneers often feign weakness, drawing their opponents into the jaws of a sudden and deadly onslaught of wild violence.

THE LAURELORN PALADINS

The Laurelorn Paladins are a relatively new Wood Elf team that has caused something of a storm by including two Treemen in its line-up! The Longbark brothers are cuttings from one of the most famous Treeman players ever, Longbark Earthroot of the Galadrieth Gladiators, and have proven to be two chips off the old block. The Longbark brothers have given the Paladins a hard hitting edge that many Wood Elf teams often lack, and numerous commentators and pundits are tipping them as the Wood Elf team to watch! Sadly, and in spite of such plaudits, the Paladins have yet to achieve any real success, and often find themselves on the wrong end of enquiries thanks to their unusual formation.

THE GREENGLADE ROOTERS

A unique team, the Greenglade Rooters is not technically a Wood Elf team at all. In spite of playing in a similar style, the Rooters are actually a team of forest spirits. A great many Spites, Dryads and Treemen are drawn to the ranks of the Rooters. Consequently, the team has suffered greatly from seasonal performance issues. Every Spring the team bursts back onto the circuit, full of vigour. This strong start builds over the Summer months to the delight of the fans. But, sadly, every year without fail the team's performance wanes in the Autumn months before, in the cold of Winter, the team slows almost to a complete stop, dropping to the bottom of the league!



TEAM ROSTER

QTY	POSITION	COST (GP)	MA	ST	AG	AV	SKILLS	NORMAL	DOUBLE
0-16	Linemen	70,000	7	3	4	7	None	GA	SP
0-4	Catchers	90,000	8	2	4	7	Catch, Dodge, Sprint	GA	SP
0-2	Throwers	90,000	7	3	4	7	Pass	GAP	S
0-2	Wardancers	120,000	8	3	4	7	Block, Dodge, Leap	GA	SP
0-1	Treeman	120,000	2	6	1	10	Loner, Mighty Blow, Stand Firm, Strong Arm, Take Root, Thick Skull, Throw Team-mate	S	GAP

0-8 Re-roll counters: 50,000 gold pieces each

STAR PLAYERS



NAME	PLAYS FOR	SKILLS	COST (GP)	MA	ST	AG	AV
Eldril Sidewinder	Dark Elf, Elven Union, High Elf, Wood Elf	Catch, Dodge, Hypnotic Gaze, Loner, Nerves of Steel, Pass Block	200,000	8	3	4	7
Jordell Freshbreeze	Elven Union, Wood Elf	Block, Diving Catch, Dodge, Leap, Loner, Side Step	260,000	8	3	5	7
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
Willow Rosebark	Amazon, Halfling, Wood Elf	Dauntless, Loner, Side Step, Thick Skull	150,000	5	4	3	8
Gloriel Summerbloom	Wood Elf	Accurate, Dodge, Loner, Pass, Side Step, Sure Hands	160,000	7	2	4	7
Swiftvine Glimmershard	Wood Elf	Disturbing Presence, Fend, Loner, Side Step, Stab, Stunty	130,000	7	2	3	6
Maple Highgrove	Wood Elf	Grab, Loner, Mighty Blow, Stand Firm, Tentacles, Thick Skull	300,000	3	5	1	10
Zolcath the Zoat	Amazon, Lizardmen, Wood Elf	Disturbing Presence, Juggernaut, Loner, Mighty Blow, Prehensile Tail, Regeneration, Sure Feet	280,000	5	5	2	9
Curnoth Darkwold	Wood Elf	Dodge, Frenzy, Jump-up, Leap, Loner, Wrestle	240,000	7	3	4	7
The Swift Twins							
Lucien	Elven Union, High Elf, Wood Elf	Block, Loner, Mighty Blow, Tackle	390,000	7	3	4	8
Valen		Accurate, Loner, Nerves of Steel, Pass, Safe Throw, Sure Hands		7	3	5	7

ATHELORN AVENGERS

Although several Elven teams became household names across the Old World in the early days of NAF competition, it wasn't until the emergence of the Darkside Cowboys in 2422 that it became apparent to other races that not all Elves were the same. Beginning their rise in prominence in NAF competition in 2472, the Athelorn Avengers are one of the most well-known Wood Elf teams on the circuit today. With an easy-going style that emphasises daring acrobatics and expert passing play, much of the Avengers' history is overshadowed by their bitter rivalry with the Darkside Cowboys, habitually underperforming for several seasons when they faced the Cowboys on the gridiron. After much training, the Avengers overcame these issues and went on to win the Blood Bowl XXXVI. Stronger than ever, pundits are claiming the Athelorn Avengers are the ones to watch in coming years. Join us, readers, as we peck away at the history of the Athelorn Avengers!

The Athelorn Avengers emerged from the woodwork to make their debut on the gridiron in 2429, joining the famous Elven Kingdoms League; a league that, as the name suggests, was exclusively for Elves (of whatever description). Their career began promisingly, dazzling the crowds with agile displays of acrobatics – something all Wood Elf teams are famed for. This promise seemed to falter however when they took to the field against the Darkside Cowboys, who gleefully introduced them to the rougher side of Blood Bowl! The game ended with the Avengers conceding after 43 minutes, over half their line-up so injured they never played Blood Bowl again. This game gave birth to one of the sport's most famous rivalries, with the Avengers swearing to become the more famed and successful team!

This vow, however, was to prove extremely difficult for the Avengers to honour. Yet, after several decades of struggle against their Dark Elf nemesis in the Elven Kingdoms League, the Athelorn Avengers were invited into the NAF, having become more well-known around the start of the 2470s. Expecting to escape their rivals, they instead found themselves placed in the NFC Central division, alongside the Darkside Cowboys. Rumours of Avengers players breaking down in the changing rooms before any game against the Dark Elves became

favoured gossip amongst the fans. The Avengers' situation then went from bad to worse when Darkside Cowboy fans began turning up to every game the Avengers played, their jeering playing a prominent role in several embarrassing losses – the most infamous being the loss against the Greenfield Grasshuggers when Darkside Cowboy fans sneakily stood in for the Halfling side's cheerleaders for the match.

The collapse of the NAF proved surprisingly favourable for the Athelorn Avengers, the rural Wood Elves adapting easily to life on the road. With mounting successes, thanks largely to being able to enter only those tournaments they wanted to and avoid certain dangerous match-ups, Head Coach Aed Hothriss used every resource available to help advance the Avengers' fortunes. Travelling from city to city, the Avengers recruited an ever-growing staff of therapists, wizards and physicians, all of whom were tasked with finding a cure for the players' crippling fear of the Cowboys. After several years, confidence was high and the Avengers signed up for the 2493 Elven Luckstone Award tournament alongside the Darkside Cowboys. When the two teams played in the group stages, the game ended with several debilitating injuries, but this time the Avengers gave as good as they got, securing their first draw (and first game played to full time! – Ed) against their long-time rivals.

Having finally escaped the shadow of their lack lustre past, the Avengers have gone from strength to strength. One of the many teams helping to shape the modern landscape of Blood Bowl – the Athelorn Avengers became the first Asrai team to lift the Blood Bowl trophy when they secured victory against Da Deff Skwad at Blood Bowl XXXVI. With a solid roster of experienced players and the will to overcome any obstacles, the Avengers created quite the spectacle as they sprinted down the field, easily slipping past more cumbersome opponents with their famed agility. Though future success is far from certain, it seems that the Athelorn Avengers are out of the woods and ready to rumble!



TEAM PROFILE: ATHELORN AVENGERS

TEAM COLOURS: The colours of nature, ever changing with the seasons

OWNER: Caesyn Dyn-Atron

HEAD COACH: Aed Hothriss

PLAYERS: Wood Elves and Treemen

TEAM HONOURS: Most Improved Hairstylist 2392, *Spike! Magazine's* Most Punctured Player Award 2465

HALL OF FAME: Jordell Freshbreeze, Jem Goldstar, Luarn Proudbow

SPIKE! TEAM RATING: 142 points

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2429 The Athelorn Avengers make their debut in the Elven Kingdoms League, winning their first few games. It's all looking good for the newcomers until they take to the field against the Darkside Cowboys. After 43 increasingly foul-fuelled minutes, the Avengers are forced to concede, having lost over half of their starting line-up to what the press release later calls '*career-limiting injuries*'. They swear vengeance, and one of Blood Bowl's most famous rivalries is born.

2472 The Avengers are welcomed into the NAF league, but unfortunately find themselves in the same division as their bitter Dark Elf rivals. The Darkside Cowboys realise that their presence is just about the only thing that can shake the Avengers' otherwise limitless confidence, and are quick to inform their fans. The Avengers suffer a number of embarrassing losses when Cowboys fans start turning up to their games to jeer, chant and generally be as much of a nuisance as possible.

2491 The Firebrand Ingots set a new record for Most Interceptions in a Single Game while facing off against the Avengers, thanks to a devious ploy involving powerful magnets and a tampered ball. Head coach Hothriss lodges a complaint, but it falls on deaf ears and the record stands. The Ingots are later bankrupted when their home stadium is taken over by a grove of several hundred tanglethorn trees. Team owner Caesyn Dyn-Atron declines to comment, suggesting only that he could recommend a number of highly qualified horticulturalists.

2489 The collapse of the NAF is a turning point for the Athelorn Avengers, giving them some much-needed breathing space from their Druchii rivals. Travelling from match to match, the more open tournament scene appears to suit their free-wheeling and easy-going style. Possessing a mastery of the long pass that few teams can deal with, the Avengers grow into a formidable opponent. Any suggestion that their success is due to their apparent avoidance of the Darkside Cowboys is carefully ignored and the questioner swiftly banned from any of the Avengers' future press conferences.

NOW After a lot of time spent in training, and even more time spent having open and honest discussions with a series of incredibly well-paid counsellors, the Avengers seem to have defeated their hang-ups regarding the Darkside Cowboys. Having faced each other across the line of scrimmage several times without the Wood Elves going to pieces, it seems their hard work has paid off!



HALL OF FAME: ATHELORN AVENGERS

2495-2496 SQUAD

NAME	POSITION	MA	ST	AG	AV	SKILLS
Jordell Freshbreeze	Wardancer	8	3	5	7	Block, Diving Catch, Dodge, Leader, Leap, Side Step
Noraen Dornvale	Wardancer	8	3	4	7	Block, Dodge, Frenzy, Leap, Strip Ball, Wrestle
Jem Goldstar	Thrower	7	3	5	7	Leader, Pass
Brelenor Ferndale	Thrower	7	3	4	7	Accurate, Pass, Sure Hands
Luarn Proudbow	Catcher	8	2	4	7	Catch, Diving Catch, Dodge, Side Step, Sprint, Sure Feet
Edrael Warwren	Catcher	8	3	4	7	Block, Catch, Dodge, Sprint
Morwyn Slenderlimb	Lineman	7	3	4	8	Guard, Stand Firm
Cathdrien Waterfall	Lineman	7	3	4	7	Block, Dodge
Issas Springblossom	Lineman	7	3	4	7	Wrestle
Honeydew Meadow	Lineman	7	3	4	7	None
Celion Riverstone	Lineman	7	3	4	7	Dodge
Daeseth Fairbloom	Lineman	7	3	4	7	Tackle
The Athelorn Avengers	2 Assistant Coaches					4 Re-rolls
Wood Elf Team	4 Cheerleaders					3 Fan Factor
Head Coach Aed Hothriss	1 Apothecary					Total Cost of Team 1,900,000 gp

FOREST FAVOURITES: The Athelorn Avengers' home ground is set deep within the realm of Athel Loren. Consequently, their most dedicated fans are an eclectic mix of Asrai and various forest spirits. At any Avengers game, there is a high chance the stands will be full of Treemen, Dryads, Spites and untold other treekin of many and varied types. This can be beneficial to both teams as the added shade keeps the sun out of players' eyes, but for opposition players pushed into the crowd, it can prove quite fatal!

When an opposition player is pushed off of the pitch and into the crowd, there is a high probability that they will vanish into the dense, arboreal gloom and not be seen again before the final whistle! Roll a D6 when an opposition player is pushed into the crowd. On the roll of a 4 or more, the player vanishes into the undergrowth and takes no further part in the game. On the roll of a 1, 2 or 3, make an Injury roll for the player as normal.

Additionally, if a Very Sunny result is rolled on the Weather table, treat it as a Nice result instead.



STAR PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

JORDELL FRESHBREEZE

Regarded by many as one of the greatest players currently in Blood Bowl, if not the greatest player ever to take to the field, Jordell Freshbreeze is a legend upon the pitch. With impressive speed and mind-boggling dexterity, Jordell weaves between his opponents like a silent, unseen wind, scoring touchdowns before anyone can register he even has the ball. Read on readers, as we catch all the details about the uncatchable player!

DID YOU KNOW...

It is a frequent topic of debate between Wood Elf and Dark Elf Blood Bowl fans about whether Jordell Freshbreeze is a better player than Jeremiah Kool. The resulting brawls are often more memorable and brutal than the games they occur at!



Jordell's professional career took off in 2476 when the Athelorn Avengers were searching for fresh new players that weren't quite so put off by the Darkside Cowboys. A promising Wardancer seeking a whole new range of thrills, Jordell stormed onto the field in his first game, utilising his preternatural athletic abilities to weave through the Dwarf Giants' defences and score a touchdown on his debut. Along the way he broke two femurs, one arm and granted a glorious death to one of their Slayers. Firmly cemented as a fan favourite, Jordell's star continued to rise.

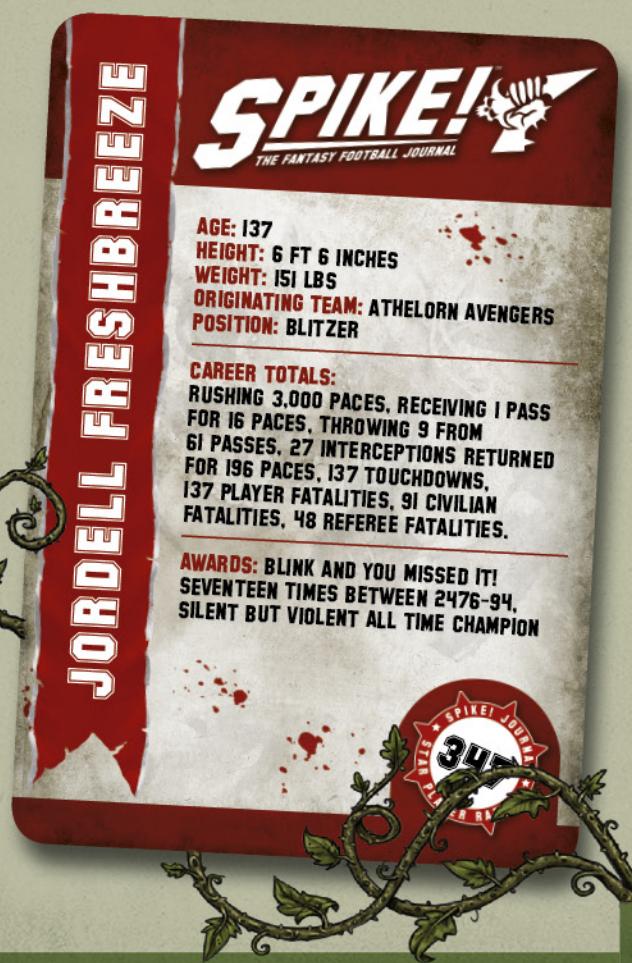
For over two decades Jordell has gone from strength to strength, consistently retaining the Blink and You Missed It! award between 2476 and 2794 (when *Jeremiah Kool didn't turn up to collect it!* – Ed) thanks to his uncanny ability to move so fast, the Avengers' opponents don't know what hit them (*Literally!* – Ed). Each time he caused endless frustration to

uncountable teams to the point that several games of Blood Bowl have devolved into all of the opposing players ignoring the ball and attempting to catch Jordell instead. Through it all the Wardancer has ducked, dipped, sidestepped and dodged through every grasping hand.

His legendary prowess has inspired a new generation of prospective Wardancers eager to compete. All hope to gain a measure of fame equal to Jordell, impressing fans with their dexterity and speed, each inspired by their idol and claiming to utilise all the latest Shadow Dances. In response to this resurgence of painted Elves backflipping their way across the field, many a Head Coach has devised new tactics to counter them. The most infamous example of this is the releasing of a Fanatic by the Moonshine Gitz into the dressing room of the Oakglade Defenders, an experimental team consisting entirely of Wardancers, during half-time.

The end result was the collapse of the stadium, the decimation of both teams, and a reluctance to use more than two Wardancers (the maximum number allowed by the NAF in past years) within a Wood Elf team from then on for fear of retribution.

After the collapse of the NAF, when many Elven teams found themselves struggling for finance, Jordell hired out his talents to any Elf team able to pay for them. Jordell's game continued to improve as he trained with other squads, ahead of his winning return to the Athelorn Avengers prior to the Blood Bowl XXXVI, in which he scored a last minute touchdown through the legs of a Troll. With such an outstanding victory under his belt, Jordell looks to be on the road to even greater fame and success, flashing that winning smile to the crowd as he flies through the air, visible only during Cabalvision's slow-motion replays!



CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2476 Signing for the Athelorn Avengers, Jordell's career gets off to an impressive start in his debut game against the Dwarf Giants, gaining a touchdown and a fatality in his first drive. Though the Avengers lost the game, Jordell secured himself a firm following amongst the fans that has only grown since.

2485 The quarter-final of the Aquitaine Cup between the Athelorn Avengers and the Carcassonne Lancers devolves into a controversial affair when the Lancers are proclaimed victors with a score of 0-1, even though the Avengers claim Jordell scored three touchdowns in the game. Several weeks of '*completely unrelated*' raids by tree spirits upon Carcassonne convince the officials to review the footage and see that Jordell did in fact score two touchdowns at a speed faster than the eye could see!

2489 With the collapse of the NAF Jordell takes his leave of the Athelorn Avengers, being hired by a variety of Elf teams across the world, Old and New. Yet Jordell makes regular returns to the Avengers, particularly so for fixtures involving the Darkside Cowboys.

2491 Challenged and insulted by the Lightbringers, a new and rambunctious team that claimed Jordell's legend is entirely false, he agrees to a match where he is the only player on his team. The Lightbringers concede extraordinarily quickly when Jordell throws the ball downfield and catches it, becoming the only player ever to have passed to themself!

2497 Aiding the Athelorn Avengers to victory at the Blood Bowl XXXVI against the Ork team Da Deff Skwad, the match came down to the final seconds. The winning touchdown was scored by Jordell himself, leaping off the head of a Black Orc before sliding between the legs of a Troll to make the score 2-1.



"One must walk the secret paths of Athel Loren, commune with nature itself and possess grace beyond the reach of all but the gods."

Jordell Freshbreeze, asked by a child on how they could grow up to be like him.

"Spend all day looking in the mirror instead of bothering to get good!"

Jeremiah Kool, proffering his own answer to the same question

DIRT FROM THE DUGOUT

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 gets to the root of the rumours surrounding Jordell Freshbreeze's supposed buy-out attempt of Orcidas!

SPIKE!: So, Mindy, we're moving from the pitch to the boardroom for today's serving of juicy gossip – tell us Mindy, are the rumours true?

MINDY: Well, I can't be certain of what goes on behind closed doors but, after watching Jordell going about his business for the last two weeks, I'm happy to hazard an opinion! I can confirm that he has met with several lawyers and accountants as well as being seen having lunch with both the executive and chief accountant of Orcidas.

SPIKE!: That's certainly intriguing! Do you know the purpose behind these meetings?

MINDY: Well, my lunch invitation went missing in the post, but my sources inside the restaurant said there was much talk about opening new lines of profit and expanding something or other. I don't want to jump to conclusions but that clearly means that Jordell isn't content with his own highly successful footwear range and a lucrative sponsorship deal, but that he wants to buy the entire company!

SPIKE!: Obviously! I have to say though, buying a company like Orcidas just because you want them to make your shoes seems like a big leap, even for a Wardancer of Jordell's expertise! Tell us Mindy, just what could be motivating Jordell to attempt such an ambitious move?

MINDY: Well, we all know that wherever Jordell's career takes him, he remains a loyal Athelorn Avenger, and the Avengers have an infamous rivalry with the Darkside Cowboys! What's even more interesting is that Orcidas has apparently been in negotiations to sponsor the Cowboys in a footwear deal my sources describe as '*the "height" of fashion*'.

SPIKE!: That certainly is a lot to process, but just what could he be hoping to achieve?

MINDY: Well, if I was Jordell, I'd be wanting to use my wealth and influence to buy the company and ruin the Cowboy's deal! No doubt delivering a massive blow right to a hated rival's treasury!



SPIKE!: Wow! So you're suggesting that Jordell is planning to sabotage the Cowboys and ruin a lucrative deal for the company he is planning to buy, all out of spite?!

MINDY: Well, a few of my sources are saying that the meetings were set up to discuss an exclusive new range of Jordell's footwear for Orcidas to commemorate the Athelorn Avengers win at the Blood Bowl XXXVI, but I say that seems unlikely when the chance to get revenge over the Cowboys is on the table!

SPIKE!: Well, there you have it folks! Decide for yourself – an elaborate and convoluted plot that would ultimately harm the sport's most famous apparel provider and no doubt the reputation of Jordell himself! Or a new range of limited edition, high quality footwear that will no doubt continue their legacy of helping you "Become a Star"?



STAR PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

SWIFTVINE GLIMMERSHARD, THE SPITEFUL SPITE

"Hell hath no fury like a Spite called small."

Mulbriz Bloodhorn, on his deathbed.





Wood Elves display incredible individuality and panache, each player offering something unique for followers of Blood Bowl fashion to ogle over. Much of this cool comes from the Asrai themselves, but arguably much more stems from the wide variety of woodland creatures and fey spirits that take to the field alongside them. The annals of Blood Bowl speak mostly of Treemen and Dryads, yet, more mystical creatures venture onto the gridiron as well. The most infamous example being Swiftvine Glimmershard, otherwise known as the 'Spiteful Sprite' and occasionally the 'Scary Fairy' (*Though only behind her back! – Ed*). Don't let her stature fool you readers, for Glimmershard is a danger to any who cross her. Join us as we twitch aside the veil of mystery that surrounds Glimmershard's past!

The Springleaf Cup of 2465 would have gone down in history as a completely unremarkable affair if not for it being the debut game of Swiftvine Glimmershard. Taking to the pitch alongside the Dar-Ellerath Beechtrees, who allegedly hired her due to her fabulous fey fashion, several of the opposing team were overcome with laughter at the cuteness of this fresh-faced rookie! Thirty-two puncture wounds later, the Beechtrees won when their opponents conceded, and Glimmershard was hailed as a hero, although she had already left to sulk in the changing rooms.

After the Beechtrees were bought out in 2480 and merged with Ashvale Valar to form the Elfheim Eagles, Glimmershard went solo, signing on to various Wood Elf teams. Glimmershard soon became infamous for her angry outbursts in reaction to anything she perceived as a slight against her. This includes but is not limited to calling her adorable, delightful, dainty or, surprisingly, fey! Even staff on the sidelines weren't spared from her ire, with everyone from referees and linemen to apothecaries feeling her wrath if they dared intervene! After several well-documented outbursts, and the infamous locker room brawl of 2484, many Wood Elf teams became reluctant to hire Glimmershard, leaving fans disappointed that her antics were no longer being broadcast on Cabalvision.

Despite her reputation as being something of a diminutive diva, Glimmershard still finds a steady stream of requests for her assistance, taking to the field alongside Asrai teams who appreciate such drama. Aware that her focus is less on actually playing the game and more in displays of fey supremacy over the mortal races, employers are happy to let her run riot, distracting their opponents while the Wood Elves play ball. As mercurial as most of her kind, Glimmershard has never revealed why she plays when she has little interest in the actual game, but fans care little as long as the violence keeps occurring!



CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2465 Swiftvine Glimmershard's debut on the gridiron is held up before the first whistle when several opposing players and a few foolish officials laugh at Glimmershard. Angered by their mocking, she makes use of the savage claws that spring suddenly from her fingertips, to puncture some vital organs and shower the crowd in blood. The fans are, of course, delighted.

2473 Despite being paid a lucrative fee, Glimmershard sits out a whole game for the Oakglade Defenders, causing no end of contractual controversy, due to what she describes as discrimination by the head coach. The Defenders quickly find themselves in the market for a new head coach when the

current one states that Glimmershard clearly doesn't have what it takes to play Blood Bowl!

2484 During a match between the Bil Bali Archers and the Underdwellers, Glimmershard is (allegedly) insulted several times by the Underdwellers and their head coach. Surprisingly, there are no outbursts from Glimmershard during the match, which causes some fans to claim she has lost her touch. Such notions are swiftly dispelled when the entire Underdwellers team are found dead in their locker room after the game, each riddled with dozens of small puncture wounds.

2487 Several Dark Elf squads ally together, attempting to encourage Glimmershard to hire her services to their teams, pointing out that she can teach their Assassins much about brutal, vindictive behaviour. Their petitions are rejected, with Glimmershard stating that she has nothing in common with Elves from Naggaroth and that allegations of her spiteful nature are heinous lies. For good measure she curses them with bad luck for two hundred years!



RAPID REFORESTATION

The Wood Elves of Athel Loren are widely considered to have produced some of the best teams ever to take to the gridiron. Yet for every flourishing success, a dozen young squads die on the vine. To find out more about the cultivation of Wood Elves, *Spike! Journal* travelled to the grim, frozen North East to meet with Don Vito of Neucastle, the overlord of that bleak realm. Unbeknownst to many, the Don has enjoyed great success training Wood Elves from within his extensive arborets. Indeed, there are few coaches in the world better placed to share his wisdom in the form of a playbook!



DID YOU KNOW...

The 2476 Elven Kingdom League holds the world record for total completed passes in a season at 14,028, with an average of 27.4 passes per team per game, a record that all teams involved are eager to brag about.

OVERVIEW

Leaping from the forests into Blood Bowl stadiums across the world, the Wood Elves are a high flying force to be reckoned with on the field. The combination of Elven agility and speed are second to none. They possess arguably one of the best starting players in the game (*the lethal and elegant Wardancer – Ed*), and are generally viewed as one of the strongest teams going. Even though they invariably lose several players over the course of a season, they are still more than capable of scoring in a heartbeat and have an uncanny ability to turn situations around, no matter how in control the opposition may seem!

Wood Elves are a highly adaptable team, able to score with alarming ease even when they are lacking numbers. A team able to steal the ball from the opposition in the blink of an eye and spirit it away even faster, Wood Elves provide a coach with a finely crafted, elite squad. Minor mistakes can be quickly smoothed over, but be warned; major mistakes, like trying to out fight a stronger and tougher opposition, can quickly see them undone!

GOOD TIMING

Much of a good Wood Elf game plan lies in the art of 'time management'. Sure, they are more than capable of scoring easily in two turns, but that doesn't mean they always should! A smart coach will realise that as soon as their team scores, they will be setting up to kick to the opposition and, more importantly, offering them a chance to take some blocks on your poor line of scrimmage. A Treeman will help soak up some of the hits, but the easiest way to avoid regularly taking a beating is simply to pause the drive and score at your leisure!

Many new coaches view stalling (*running down the clock – Ed*) as unsporting behaviour. This simply isn't the case. Furthermore, it is often the best way for a Wood Elf team to preserve players, control the scoreboard and ensure victory! Every time you begin a drive you should ask yourself, "When do I want to score?" Sometimes you may not want to cross the line too soon, whilst at others you may need to score very quickly indeed. You could be enjoying the luxury of a numerical advantage and strong lead, in which case stalling before extending that lead is valid. Alternatively, your team might be trailing and you need to score in a hurry to lessen the gap, in which case stalling is not an option. Or perhaps there are several turns left, and scoring too quickly might give the other team a good chance to score themselves!

Knowing the limitations of the opposition will also affect your choice to score early or late in a drive. Some opponents will struggle to score quickly, so scoring in turn six onwards may be enough to secure a lead. If facing a slower team, they will often prioritise casualties over touchdowns, so prolonging a drive too much may cause numbers to dwindle, making the second half (*or future fixtures – Ed*) difficult. All of these important factors need to be weighed up when deciding how to dictate the timing of your drives.

UNDER PRESSURE

The second key aspect of Wood Elf success lies in knowing when to increase or decrease the risk. Wood Elves are likely to be starting a half with few re-rolls, and despite all those players with the Dodge skill, there will always be Turnovers. Learning when to avoid risk and take a relatively careful turn in which players simply move into a better position with as few dice rolls as possible is an important skill. This is especially true if a re-roll has been used early on in the drive. Turning down blocks and dodging away to reposition can feel wrong to a Blood Bowl coach, but is sometimes a Wood Elf coach's best option. It's very unusual for a Wood Elf team to win a game through casualties, and keeping players away from the opposition limits them to one Blitz per turn with no other easy blocks to remove precious players.

The flip side of this is possibly one of the most difficult things for any coach to learn – when to step up the risk and start applying pressure. It's hard to pinpoint any exact example as every game is different, but knowing when to start marking opposition players on the corners of cages, dodging through tackle zones and leaping with a Wardancer to blitz opposition ball carriers is a skill that makes Wood Elves fearsome in defence. Quite often the biggest problem faced is that the Wood Elf coach might leave it too late and not have enough players left to try the razzle dazzle plays...



LEAGUE ROSTER

With the basic player costing a relatively expensive 70,000 gold pieces, it becomes apparent quite quickly that sacrifices must be made to start a league team. Buying team re-rolls at team creation absolutely makes sense as they are available at half the price they will be after the team has played a game. One re-roll is essential, two would be recommended (three would be wonderful, but just might not be possible).

Wardancers are the show-stopping stars of the team, and no self-respecting Wood Elf coach would begin a season without their two best players. A pair of Wardancers should be the first two slots filled on any team. Unfortunately, this doesn't leave much money left to buy the rest of the squad!

After buying two re-rolls and a brace of Wardancers, there is a small choice to make. To complete the roster with the minimum requirement of 11 starting players can be done by adding nine Linemen. That would leave 30,000 gold pieces unspent to save towards a Team Apothecary. The alternative would be to draft in a single Thrower or Catcher instead of one of the Linemen, leaving just 10,000 gold pieces remaining. With the Wood Elf passing game being so strong, it is relatively easy to gain skills on these players, and a lot of coaches choose to bring them in later on as they can catch up quickly with the rest of the team's development. As the Linemen invariably get injured or die, the aim is to save the cash to bring in specialist positions to replace them. If money is short, Journeymen do the job almost as well.

DEVELOPMENT

PLAYER	SINGLE SKILL	DOUBLE SKILL
Wardancers	Strip Ball, Tackle, Frenzy, Side Step	Mighty Blow
Throwers	Leader, Sure Hands, Dodge, Accurate	Guard*
Catchers	Block/Wrestle, Sure Feet, Side Step, Diving Tackle	Guard*
Linemen	Dodge, Wrestle (or Block), Kick	Guard*
Treeman	Guard, Grab, Break Tackle	Block, Jump Up

**Wood Elves with Guard are fantastic, but will need protecting (ironically!). It is wise to develop these players to have Dodge and Block as soon as possible to increase their survivability.*

REGARDING CHARACTERISTIC INCREASES

Wood Elves will want to take every characteristic increase they are lucky enough to get! Movement is favoured over Armour as it only makes them better at what they already excel at. The same is true for Agility increases. Plus, as any Blood Bowl coach knows, anyone turning down a Strength boost incurs Nuffle's wrath for the rest of their coaching career!

EXHIBITION PLAY

ATournament roster for Wood Elves usually involves a 1,100,000 gold pieces (or more) starting treasury, and a package of skills to begin with that don't cost anything. While there are many different options for this team, there are tried and tested rosters and suggested skills that have done consistently well on the tournament scene for a number of years.

The typical build involves a Treeman leading the line of scrimmage, a Thrower for the backfield, the two obligatory Wardancers, three Catchers, and four Linemen. This 11 player set-up costs exactly 1,000,000 gold pieces. The remaining gold pieces can be used to buy re-rolls, or perhaps even an Apothecary.

Skill allocation almost always begins with three core choices. Leader on the Thrower, for a second (or third) vital re-roll. Strip Ball on one of the Wardancers, to be used as a defensive threat when hitting the ball carrier, often after leaping into a cage. With them starting with Block, it means potentially four of the five possible Block dice results will end up with the ball coming loose, so even a half-dice blitz (*in Neucastle, it is common to call a block in which you roll two dice against a stronger opposition player, allowing the opposing coach to choose the result,*



a 'half-dice block' – Ed) can be an effective option. The mere presence of a Strip Ball Wardancer can change an opponent's plans, so keeping this player safe and in range to attack can be just as effective as actually committing them to the attack.

The second Wardancer usually takes the third core choice of Tackle, although Frenzy is a strong option. Tackle and Block combined with the Wardancer's high Movement and Dodge skill means that this player can be used for precise blitzes on weaker players almost anywhere across the field. Any remaining skill choices you are allowed to take could include a variety of great single choices: Block on Catchers, Dodge or Wrestle on Linemen, Kick is never a bad choice either, and some even give skills to their Treeman that could aid a one turn attempt.

Of course there are alternative options to this roster. A lot of coaches prefer to trade their Treeman for a Lineman, freeing up 50,000 gold pieces to buy a third re-roll or Apothecary. The argument is that whilst a Treeman is excellent at taking hits and can occasionally dish out the pain himself, he is too slow to keep up with the team's fluid movement, and can often get left behind or rooted. Trading the Treeman for a Lineman and Apothecary means you can always opt to keep a Knocked Out player on the field, or try to save your best player from injury. The counter-argument is that having the Treeman front and centre means you take fewer injuries in the first place. There is no right answer here – coaches should experiment and decide for themselves!

OFFENSIVE SET-UPS

It is hard to list specific set formations for a Wood Elf offence. Very often a coach will find themselves setting up with less than 11 players, but typically this won't hinder an offence because the team is so mobile and reactive, and can score with fewer players than most teams need. There are some general guidelines to follow though, so here are some suggestions...

Try to keep at least two players near the centre of the field. One to pick the ball up and start the drive, the second for protection or to cover a deeper kick and provide options.

Commit as few players as possible. Fighting on the Line of Scrimmage will only draw the team into a blocking war it is unlikely to win. Take any free hits but keep in mind that Wood Elves want to control knock downs and pushbacks to minimise or cancel any retaliatory blocks during the opposition's turn. Ideally, players will have a follow-up to stand over any players they knock down, whilst keeping everyone out of tackle zones.

Plan ahead and set up for the first turn's blitz action. Have two players not standing on the Line of Scrimmage (one square back is ideal) ready to lend assistance. The target of the blitz will ideally gain the Wood Elves positional advantage, be it a weaker player or a player with a key skill. Try to also have a second option in mind in case the kick-off result causes plans to change.

Be reactive. Wood Elves are one of the fastest teams and have a lot of Dodge built in, so maximise that. A good Wood Elf offence will switch from side to side, taking its time until the opposition simply can't cover everywhere and it can lap around them. Against some opponents a traditional cage isn't needed, the team can rely more on 'screens' of players. Aim to cut areas of the pitch off from the opposition whilst making space for Wood Elves to move in, always leaving several options for scoring that the opposition has to address.

Remember that timing and pace is the key. If you are short on players, if you are losing or if there is only a couple of turns left, then step up the pace. Luckily, Wood Elves are very capable of scoring in only two turns with ease. Simply get as many players in a scoring position as possible, and keep the ball carrier back out of range of a blitz or with players screening them. The next turn will be a simple matter of finding the best way to get through whatever defence the opposition has set up.

Plan for anything! With the possibility of the kick-off generating a Blitz, Perfect Defence, Thrown Rock or even a Pitch Invasion, anything can happen. So try to bear this in mind and have an alternative play ready.

DID YOU KNOW...

Yellowbirch Slybranch made a surprise comeback in 2493, long after being declared dead. This startling revelation occurred during the opening match at the newly renovated Eagle Nest stadium when the tree planted between the bleachers turned out to be a slumbering Slybranch left alone for 32 years!



COFFIN CORNER

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

TIMBER!

We remember Filbren Surefeet, Thrower for the Bil Bali Archers. During a particularly brutal game against the Bluchen Berserkers, the Bil Bali Archers Treeman, Greybark Twistyroots, stumbled and fell on his team-mate, crushing all but the unfortunate Elf's feet to a paste!

DANCE OF DEATH

We remember Arnoth Quill-tree, Wardancer for the Oakglade Defenders. During a match against the Dwarf Warhammers, Quill-tree became overly enthusiastic about showing off his newly developed Shadow Dance, which resulted in him being surrounded by angry Dwarf players. Subsequent, if inevitable, events have been commemorated in the Hammerers' fans' new terrace chant:

*"He ain't never gonna dance again!
Quill-tree's feet ain't got no rhythm!"*

A TACKLE OF TWO HALVES

We remember Esys Grassglider, Linewoman for the Laurelorn Paladins. After several successful games, delivering many impressive blocks against tougher opponents, Grassglider bit off more than she could chew when she attempted to tackle two Trolls at once and ended up being the meal for them both!

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

DEFENSIVE SET-UPS

As the game goes on, you are usually trying to do one of two things. Often, you want to increase the tempo and apply pressure to force a turnover. Depending on the game you may however be looking to slow the game down and stall your opponent to try to force them into a bad turn, a poorly positioned turn, or simply to cause them to run out of time on their drive. Here's a suggestion for how to do both:

PRESSURE DEFENCE



This defence doesn't leave any easy ways through, even if the other team goes down a sideline, both Wardancers are within range to defend and can usually trap the opposition if they overcommit. This set-up also maximises any early Turnovers from the opposition or a Blitz kick-off result, with fast Catchers at the front and Wardancers able to create space for them to rush through. It can be caught out by a Quick Snap, so consider moving everyone one square back to create some pressure but not overcommit yourself.

REACTIVE DEFENCE



This offers the wide zones to the other team, but also limits their choice of players to blitz and gives you enough players who can't be marked to react to whatever the opposition tries. Often, you don't mind the opposition going down your sideline as you can effectively box them in and then send a Wardancer leaping into prime blitzing position.

ONE TURN TOUCHDOWNS

Many teams in Blood Bowl are capable of scoring in one turn, and Wood Elf teams are perhaps the best at this. The theory behind the one turn touchdown is fairly straightforward – your players are set up for the kick-off so that you can easily move them to fill any squares into which a pushed back player might be moved, thus setting up what is called a ‘chain push’. This means that every time a blocked player is pushed back, they will have to move into an occupied square, causing the player occupying that square to be pushed back as well. In this way, it is possible to move one or more players on your team by blocking and pushing back an opposing player.

Once in position, use your Blitz to move behind your opponent’s Line of Scrimmage and push one of the opposition players there back into your half of the pitch. After this, you will need to perform a series of blocks with your remaining players, hoping for a Push Back result each time in order to chain push that player into your players. In this way, you can propel a Catcher several squares into the opposition’s half without them being activated. Once at they are at least two squares into the opposition’s half, get the ball to the Catcher, make some dodges, and use the Sprint skill to score with ease! Well, that’s the theory of course...

Every attempt will be different and can be made easier or more difficult in a variety of situations (eg, Perfect Defence, Blitz, Quick Snap, having players with Frenzy/Grab/ Side Step, etc...). Spending some time to put models on the pitch and work out the basic theory is almost required homework for a Wood Elf coach, as even the tiniest chance to score is better than not trying and settling for no chance at all!

SUMMARY

Wood Elves are blindingly fast. They have power and precision with Wardancers able to create opportunities from nowhere, speedy Catchers, and the overall agility of a team that can score with ease. They can react to any situation, are competitive even when outnumbered, and will always have a back-up plan if things start to go wrong. Yes, they are fragile and will seldom end a game (or even a drive) without losing someone, but this doesn’t slow them down. With enough experience you will appreciate how to master the essential elements that make a Wood Elf team successful – managing the clock, the amount of risk you should be taking each turn, and how to control the pitch, both on offence and defence. If you have the patience to learn how to use this team to its maximum potential, you’ll soon see why they are regarded as one of the best teams there is.



KEY

- Catcher
- Wardancer
- Thrower
- Lineman
- Treeman

STAR PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

WILLOW ROSEBARK

Some players play for thrills, others for fame and even more for the love of spilling blood. In the case of Willow Rosebark, the infamous Dryad plays for... well, we're not entirely sure and no one has ever gotten a straight answer! This month in *Spike! Journal*, we take a brief look at this capricious player's career!



WILLOW ROSEBARK

SPIKE!
THE FANTASY FOOTBALL JOURNAL

AGE: UNKNOWN (SPIKE! JOURNAL UNDERSTANDS THAT THE BEST WAY TO ESTABLISH THIS WOULD BE TO COUNT HER RINGS, BUT NO ONE'S WORKED UP THE COURAGE TO ASK)

HEIGHT: BETWEEN 5 FT 7 INCHES AND 7 FT 1 INCHES, DEPENDING ON THE SEASON.

WEIGHT: BETWEEN 109 LBS AND 167 LBS, DEPENDING ON HOW RECENTLY SHE'S BEEN PRUNING.

ORIGINATING TEAM: ATHELORN AVENGERS?

POSITION: BLOCKER

CAREER TOTALS: 7 RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS, 92 KILLS/SERIOUS INJURIES

AWARDS: MESMERISING MUTILATION AWARD
2479, SCARIEST GAME FACE 2482



Dryads are, by nature, fluid and temperamental creatures, their moods changing with the season and their actions decided by the weather! With their kind being notoriously uninterested in Blood Bowl, it came as quite a surprise when, in 2470, Willow Rosebark took to the gridiron alongside the Athelorn Avengers. Rosebark's professional career didn't really take off until years later when, while playing for the Underbrush Underdogs, she went toe-to-toe with Morg 'n' Thorg.

Since then Rosebark has pursued a memorable, if rather sparse, career in Blood Bowl, lending her talents to a variety of different teams over the years – often without the team ever having requested them!

Across the circuit Rosebark is known for two things: changing her mind and flattening opponents. Like most of her kin, Rosebark's interests can turn at a moment's notice and it is not unheard of for her to change teams numerous times during a season, the most famous example being the 2481 season where she played for a total of eight different teams, despite only playing five games! Normally, such shifting behaviour would see a player rejected by prospective employers due to unreliability, but Rosebark's mercurial form lends her a strength beyond what her willowy stature suggests – at a moment's notice thorny vines burst forth and her mass multiplies with vibrant growth, allowing her to match the strength of the largest of Blood Bowl players. Upon her rare appearances, Rosebark is sure to break bones and smash faces, carving open the opposition defence and allowing her newly-adopted team-mates to score.

With such a reputation for delivering spectacular injury whenever she takes to the astrogranite, a growing fan club eagerly tracks every rumour as they watch out for Rosebark's appearances – some even claim they know someone who knows someone in Athel Loren that can talk to trees who knows when Rosebark will be playing! With a penchant for settling grudges upon the field, some fans allegedly go so far as to desecrate groves she is said to watch over, leaving behind 'evidence' that points towards certain Blood Bowl teams just to encourage her to show up. When she does, she is greeted with raucous applause. A firm favourite with fans of violence (*which should be all of you! – Ed*), Willow Rosebark has taken root in the hearts of many eagerly awaiting the mayhem that accompanies her every appearance.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2470 The first appearance of a Dryad in a NAF-sanctioned game is recorded when Willow Rosebark takes to the field alongside the Athelorn Avengers in their season opener against the Gouged Eye. Some sources suggest that she'd already been playing for some time in the backwater leagues, but her origins – and her reasons for taking part in a sport to which her kind is generally ambivalent – remain a mystery.

"Come back... in Spring..."

Willow Rosebark, Interview by an ABC reporter during the Winter of 2483

2478 After several seasons away from the game, Rosebark resurfaces, this time playing for the Underbrush Underdogs in their match against the Chaos All-Stars. Famously facing off against Morg 'n' Thorg, the slender Dryad tackles the hefty Ogre head-on. Just as they're about to collide, Rosebark sprouts thorny vines – almost doubling her mass – and to the crowd's delight, she flattens Morg without breaking stride! Across the land, fans sit up and take notice.

2480 A number of stadiums within a short distance of each other are vandalised by a host of Dryads and other forest spirits. It is soon deduced that all of them are built with wood from the same grove, which – it is revealed,

was held sacred by certain forest-dwellers... Rosebark is implicated, but when no evidence is forthcoming, she publicly decries such obvious profiling and the case is dropped.

2487 Rosebark turns up during the pre-game show of a rather one-sided clash between the Greenfield Grasshuggers and the Champions of Death, pledging her services to the thoroughly outclassed Halflings. The Grasshuggers still lose, but the deadly Dryad makes short work of the Undead fiends – it later comes out that they had been bolstering their ranks by raiding a burial cairn in a nearby forest, which Rosebark had presumably declared off-limits. The lesson is obvious – don't mess with the trees!

STAR PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

ZOLCATH THE ZOAT

"Everyone keeps saying I'm the 'dark horse' of Blood Bowl. But I'm a Zoat, not a horse!"

Zolcath, during his acceptance speech for the Bloodweiser Best Newcomer's Medal, 2466.

ZOLCATH THE ZOAT

ZOAT

280,000 GOLD PIECES



MA	ST	AG	AV
5	5	2	9

SKILLS:
DISTURBING PRESENCE, JUGGERNAUT, LONER,
MIGHTY BLOW, PREHENSILE TAIL,
REGENERATION, SURE FEET

TEAMS:
AMAZON, LIZARDMEN, WOOD ELF

As elusive as a Zoat! is a phrase often used in Elven society to describe an Elf who avoids social gatherings – and for good reason! Well, here at *Spike! Journal*, we got the inside scoop on Zoats when we sat down with Zolcath, a bona fide Zoat and talented Blood Bowl player. So, seekers of knowledge, read on for the enlightening truth about this peculiar figure!

It is said that Zoats have an unparalleled ability to bend the lifewind to their will, so much so that the Wood Elves seek them out in the hope of learning new skills. When one such hopeful Elf sought out Zolcath in search of subtle magics to aid their faltering career on the gridiron, they instead found themselves a teacher. Apparently bored of his isolated life, this new sport was of much interest to Zolcath. After learning the basics, he left his refuge, and the bewildered Elf, in search of a team to join.

His first appearance was in 2466, and the sight of a Zoat on the field proved quite confusing – for players and fans alike. Whilst match officials argued over just what this strange creature was, Zolcath dominated the midfield with powerful blows from his fists and tail. Over the coming season, he added some much-needed muscle to several Wood Elf squads, proving considerably faster than a Treeman.

In recent years, Zolcath has been largely absent from the pitch having retreated back to his mysterious arboreal realm. Many claim his disappearance is due to numerous complaints from other Zoats about him ruining their mystique by being so visible (*I still don't know what a Zoat is!* – Ed). In recognition of this, Zolcath now requires a prospective team to locate him before hiring his skills. Often this becomes a rite of passage for a team's new talent scout, many of them vanishing within the dark forests of the world forever. Of those who do find him, Zolcath is eager to accept their offer, thundering onto the pitch once more!

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2466 Zolcath becomes the first (and only) Zoat to take to the field. Appearing for the Laurelorn Paladins, Zolcath adds some much-needed muscle to the midfield for a team that has recently lost their Treeman thanks to a kindling misunderstanding. Despite this impressive display, the Paladins still lose, because Zolcath doesn't fully understand the game, helpfully handing the ball to an opponent who "seemed to want it".

2472 Over several seasons, Zolcath vastly improves his understanding of the rules. His hard work pays off during the semi-final of the Burning Serpent Cup when, passed the ball by a team-mate and now fully aware of its importance, Zolcath bludgeons his way through the opposition's defensive line to score his first, and only, touchdown.

2479 Facing off against two Trolls, Zolcath uses his renowned strength to throw one towards the crowd. The second however ploughs into a tower of cheerleaders, their subsequent impromptu show of aggrieved violence becoming the most replayed moment on Cabalvision for the next three months.

2492 Zolcath returns to play alongside the Laurelorn Paladins once more during the final of the Springleaf Cup. Initially hoping to join the team for the entire tournament, Zolcath's elusive hideaway is only located days before the final match. Arriving at the end of the first half, Zolcath takes to the field enthusiastically, allowing the Paladins to make a comeback and win 2-1.





SOMETHING IN THE WOODS – LESSER KNOWN WOOD ELF STAR PLAYERS

Of all the Elven races to take to the Blood Bowl pitch, it is the Wood Elves of Athel Loren that are the most diverse in appearance. And this diversity is reflected in the players deemed eligible for inclusion in Wood Elf teams. Where Dark Elves and High Elves are rather conservative when it comes to signing players of other races, Wood Elves are quick to sign up the many and varied creatures that share their woodland realm. And why would they not? Athel Loren is a vast, primordial forest. As old as the world, this arboreal wonderland is amongst the most magical and mythical places to be found!

Athel Loren is home not just to Elves, but to countless forest spirits. From vicious and vindictive Dryads, to lumbering Treemen and everything in between. The more magical denizens of Athel Loren, just like everyone else in the world, dream of fame, fortune and sporting glory. They might live their lives hidden behind a veil of sorcery and secrecy in their mysterious homelands, but when the opportunity arises to take to the pitch, they're never shy to approach the gridiron and announce to the world...

"I'm fey, get out of my way!"

GLORIEL SUMMERBLOOM, THE FLOWER SPIRIT

Though Wood Elves are often known for their whimsical natures, Gloriel Summerbloom is viewed as particularly carefree and free-spirited. Though she has gone on record as finding the profound(*ly entertaining!* – Ed) violence of Blood Bowl to be distasteful, Gloriel still regularly takes to the field, justifying her participation with claims that true serenity can be reached upon the pitch. While violence may not be her forte, the skill of her throwing arm is beyond doubt, able to throw a perfect pass with her eyes literally closed, in what many describe as nature aiding her efforts.

SPIKE! EXCLUSIVE STAR PLAYER PROFILE:

AGE: 68 **HEIGHT:** 5 ft 5 inches **WEIGHT:** 109 lbs

ORIGINATING TEAM: The Laurelorn Paladins

POSITION: Thrower **CAREER TOTALS:** Passing 94 from 102 for 859 paces, 32 passing touchdowns,

AWARDS: Lauriel Elflock's Fabulous Follicles Award 2483, Spike! Magazine Strong Arm Award 2489

SPIKE! MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER RATING: 127

GLORIEL SUMMERBLOOM

WOOD ELF

160,000 GOLD PIECES



MA	ST	AG	AV
7	2	4	7

SKILLS:

ACCURATE, DODGE, LONER, PASS,
SIDE STEP, SURE HANDS

TEAMS:

WOOD ELF

CURNOTH DARKWOLD, WILD WARDANCER

When Curnoth Darkwold burst onto the pitch in a whirlwind of limbs and tangled hair, he had no intent of actually playing, but had instead been attracted to the match by the scent of blood upon the wind! After killing several players from both teams, a confused Darkwold was snapped up by an agent desperate for new clients. As luck would have it, Darkwold proved to be an excellent asset, for he loved a good hunt and was thrilled to learn that the other team would be trying to hunt him too! Darkwold soon gained a reputation for his savagery, noted both for his questionable hygiene and his tendency to commit brutal acts of violence – both traits much appreciated by fans of Blood Bowl.

SPIKE! EXCLUSIVE STAR PLAYER PROFILE:

AGE: 167 **HEIGHT:** 6 ft 1 inches **WEIGHT:** 153 lbs

ORIGINATING TEAM: Bil Bali Archers **POSITION:** Blitzer

CAREER TOTALS: 13 rushing touchdowns, 76 kills/
serious injuries **AWARDS:** Leo Sweres Fine Dining Award

2484, Filthiest Player 2487, Artful Assailment Award 2490

SPIKE! MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER RATING: 171

CURNOTH DARKWOLD

WOOD ELF

240,000 GOLD PIECES



MA	ST	AG	AV
7	3	4	7

SKILLS:

DODGE, FRENZY, JUMP-UP,
LEAP, LONER, WRESTLE

TEAMS:

WOOD ELF

ELDRIL SIDEWINDER, A SEA ELF OF DISTINCTION

Eldril Sidewinder has played Blood Bowl as long as most can remember, partly due to the incredibly long life span of his race, but mainly thanks to his sheer skill on the pitch. The secret of his success (and longevity) lies in his belonging to a singular class within Wood Elf and Sea Elf society – the Wardancers. These warriors combine athleticism and deadly skill, and are capable of dashing through a melee, weaving and leaping about their opponents while transfixing them with their grace such that foes are unable to react or even to think clearly. So beguiling are the movements of a skilled Wardancer that some claim it to be some manner of boon from the dark gods, a misconception that Sidewinder is ever keen to refute.

SPIKE! EXCLUSIVE STAR PLAYER PROFILE:

AGE: 169 **HEIGHT:** 6 ft 6 inches **WEIGHT:** 158 lbs

ORIGINATING TEAM: Caledor Dragons

POSITION: Catcher **CAREER TOTALS:** Rushing 1,006 paces, receiving 91 passes for 2,612 paces, throwing 37 passes from 55 for 406 paces, 65 touchdowns, 41 interceptions returned for 506 paces, 19 player fatalities

AWARDS: Delightful Decapitation Award 2490, Artful Assailment Award 2493, Mesmerising Mutilation Award 2472 **SPIKE! MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER RATING:** 278



MAPLE HIGHGROVE, YOUNG AND SAPPY

Unlike many Treemen, Maple Highgrove was born with a sense of wanderlust that constantly pulled him away from the forest where he had sprouted. Unable to contain the feeling that there were greater things beyond the boundaries of his arboreal realm, Maple set out on his journey just as soon as his roots were tough enough for trekking. As luck would have it, the first individuals he encountered was a group of Wood Elves practicing for an upcoming Blood Bowl match. Several years later, Maple is still growing on the gridiron, the young Treeman wrapping his opponents in writhing roots and bludgeoning them with powerful blows.

SPIKE! EXCLUSIVE STAR PLAYER PROFILE:

AGE: 109 seasons **HEIGHT:** 24ft (approx) depending on the season **WEIGHT:** 3.6 tonnes (estimated 2.8 tonnes dry mass) **ORIGINATING TEAM:** Greenglade Rooters

POSITION: Wherever the wind blows **CAREER TOTALS:** 27 rushing yards, 31 fatalities/serious injuries, 11 inches taller since debut **AWARDS:** Wunder Gro Best Youth Player Newcomer Medal 2495 **SPIKE! MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER RATING:** 197



“I for one am tired of entertaining the notion. I never have beseeched, nor ever will, the Chaos gods for power, nor been the recipient of one of their twisted ‘gifts’. My skills are purely Elven in nature. That is all.”

Eldril Sidewinder, answering accusations about the source of his skill

“Listen closely and let the whispers of blessed air guide your hand.”

Gloriel Summerbloom, Spike! Magazine’s 2493 Beginner’s Guide to Throwing Straight

“I just wanted to get out there and stretch my branches.”

Maple Highgrove, on why he left home

“The hunt is far more thrilling if your prey is trying to kill you too.”

Curnoth Darkwold



BENEATH THE CANOPY

A GUIDED TOUR OF ATHEL LOREN



DID YOU KNOW...

Countless attempts to host competitions within Athel Loren have failed to take off, largely due to the Wood Elves' reluctance to share the safe paths through the forest with outsiders, even ones they have invited! They claim that the forest floor being littered with skeletons in Blood Bowl replica kits is completely unrelated.

Blood Bowl fans are a widely travelled sort. They will follow their teams the known world over, visiting far off and exotic lands to support them in competition. But sadly, most such road trips rarely stop to take in the wonder of the scenery – fans seem content to view the world as little more than a series of stadia! We here at *Spike! Journal*, being the experienced travellers that we are, think that this is a shame. We would encourage our readers to extend their trips by a day or two and to take the time to explore. It's a wonderful world, sports fans!

Nestled between the towering Grey Mountains and the endless plains of Bretonnia, the forest of Athel Loren is a verdant woodland and home to countless secrets. This mysterious realm is consistently ranked as one of the greatest mysteries of the Old World, right above that otherworldly Bretonnian lady who lives in a lake and hands out swords all the time. In recent years, this once-secretive realm has thrown open its borders to visiting Blood Bowl teams and their dedicated fans, making this the ideal time to visit as your favourite *Spike! Journal* takes you on a magical tour of these untouched lands. From towering trees seeded at the dawn of the world, to the tiniest flowers humming the tune of nature, Athel Loren is THE place to visit in 2497!

Ever wanted to leave the hustle and bustle of city life behind, spread your wings and visit somewhere a bit quieter and a lot more mystical? Well then, Athel Loren might just be the place for you! Managed by dedicated defenders who push back against the ever-encroaching grip of civilisation, crossing the forest boundary plunges you into a twilight realm you'll never want to leave. Full of surprises, a visit to these ancient lands is always unique and changes with the seasons, making it an ideal destination all year round.

Hiking tours are the beating heart of any holiday in Athel Loren, with well-trodden paths taking you to lands barely touched by mortal feet. Twisting roads and branching paths offer new routes to explore with each visit, and even returning to the start of your journey will surprise and delight, as the pathways shift and trees move. For those lacking a sense of direction have no fear, for local guides knowledgeable of Athel Loren's hidden beauties are always on hand to offer help – just look for them beckoning to you from between the trees! For those wishing for a guided tour, the best seasons are Spring and Summer, when the locals shake off their winter lethargy and are brimming with the desire to share their secrets!

Those seeking a more authentic Athel Loren experience need not look far. Simply venture off the paths and open your eyes to a whole new side of the forest. Pass the time watching the many fantastical creatures skittering to and fro, hidden away from the prying eyes of greedy lumberjacks and sadistic hunters. Fall asleep upon the soft grass of peaceful glades, lulled to deep slumber by melodious birdsong and giggling Spites within the treetops. Watch as the forest truly comes alive before your eyes and shows you sights you'll not forget until your dying day!

So, take a chance and visit Athel Loren! The perfect getaway for anyone wishing to leave all their worries behind – the only danger is that you may never be able to return to the place you once called home!



CAMPING IN ATHEL LOREN – TIPS & TRICKS

With little in the way of inns and taverns, Athel Loren is the number one place for those bit by the camping bug. Though beautiful, the forest can be dangerous, but *Spike! Journal* is here with some helpful tips for a healthy, hearty trip:

- **Avoid open fires and use only deadwood as kindling**
- **Don't pitch your tent under a tree – it might get offended**
- **Pack plenty of Spite repellent**
- **Bring your own meat or the locals might hunt you!**

THINGS TO DO IN ATHEL LOREN – THE RUNNING OF THE STAGS

No getaway is complete without partaking in the local traditions. The spiritual successor of Estalia's Charge of the Minotaurs, the Running of the Stags is rapidly becoming one of Athel Loren's oldest traditions. The highlight of every summer, visitors get to run in front of a charging herd of stags ridden by Elves wearing traditional Athel Loren dress. Risking life and limb, you can try to outrun the Wild Hunt in the most dangerous game around!

*This guided tour is sponsored by '572 Reasons Why Mortal Races Deserve to be Exterminated' by Melancholy Willowbranch. Any and all harm, including, but not limited to, loss of limb and/or death, suffered by visiting Athel Loren is solely the fault of the individual in question and *Spike! Journal* assumes no responsibility for a person's actions after the reading of this article.*

NEW WEATHER TABLES

Blood Bowl players are made from some stern stuff and rarely let such trivial things as the weather stop them from taking to the pitch (*Unless they're Elves and it will ruin their hair! – Ed*). Rain or shine, sleet or tornado, no matter the time of the year, excited fans are sure to find a game worth watching!

If both coaches agree, they can use one of the following tables in place of the Weather table in the *Blood Bowl* rulebook for the duration of the match. This is ideal for representing matches played at different times in different seasons. A League Commissioner may also decide that a league is being held in a particular season and that all games use one of the following tables. Any rules that refer to the Weather table (for example, the Changing Weather result on the Kick-off table) refer to this table if you are using it.

SPRING WEATHER TABLE

2D6 RESULT

- 2 **Morning Dew:** The pitch is dew-covered from the cold of night, making everything a little slippery. Any player attempting to move an extra square when Going for It! will slip and be Knocked Down on a roll of 1-2. Additionally, a -1 modifier applies to all Pick-up rolls.
- 3 **Blossoming Flowers:** The flowers are budding and the pollen count is high, forcing the hay fever-suffering referee to seek shelter. Players cannot be sent off for fouling even if a double is rolled for the Armour roll or Injury roll.
- 4-10 **Temperate:** It's not quite warm but, then again, it's not quite cold – ideal Blood Bowl weather! This counts as a 'Nice' result for purposes of the Changing Weather result on the Kick-off table.
- 11 **Thick Fog:** A haze of fog has descended onto the pitch, greatly reducing visibility. Players can only move a maximum of six squares, although they may still Go For It! after. Only Quick and Short passes can be attempted.
- 12 **High Winds:** The winds are whistling through the stadium and the players can barely hear each other. Roll a D6 each time a player wishes to use a team re-roll. On a 2+ they may use the team re-roll as normal. On a 1, the original result stands without being re-rolled but the team re-roll is not lost and this does not count as the use of a team re-roll for this turn.

SUMMER WEATHER TABLE

2D6 RESULT

- 2 **Sweltering Heat:** It's so hot and humid that some players collapse from heat exhaustion. Roll a D6 for each player on the pitch at the end of a drive. On a roll of 1, the player collapses and may not be set up for the next kick-off.
- 3 **Melting Astrogranite:** It's not just the players that are affected by the hot weather – even the pitch is melting! Players can attempt to move one less square when Going for It than normal.
- 4-10 **Nice:** Perfect Blood Bowl weather!
- 11 **Blinding Rays:** No cloud cover and the beating sun make it impossible to see very far. Only Quick or Short Passes can be attempted and the blinding sunshine causes a -1 modifier on all Passing rolls.
- 12 **Monsoon:** A sudden burst of torrential rain and high winds hits the pitch, making the ball slippery and erratic in the air. A -1 modifier applies to all Catch, Intercept, or Pick-up rolls and the ball scatters one extra square in a random direction whenever it scatters.

AUTUMN WEATHER TABLE

2D6 RESULT

2 **Leaf-strewn Pitch:** Seems like the groundskeepers haven't been doing their job properly! Whenever a player is Knocked Down, subtract 1 from the result of the Armour roll.

3 **Autumn Chill:** Winter is fast approaching and players are reluctant to leave the warmth of the dugout. Subtract 1 from the result of all dice rolls you make to see whether one of your players recovers from being KO'd.

4-10 **Temperate:** It's not quite warm but then again, it's not quite cold – ideal Blood Bowl weather! This counts as a 'Nice' result for purposes of the Changing Weather result on the Kick-off table.

11 **Pouring Rain:** It's raining, making the ball slippery and difficult to hold. A -1 modifier applies to all Catch, Intercept, or Pick-up rolls.

12 **Strong Winds:** The wind's kicking off! Immediately roll on the Scatter template to determine the direction of the wind. During Kick-offs and Inaccurate Passes, the ball scatters D3 in this direction before normal Scatter rolls are made.

WINTER WEATHER TABLE

2D6 RESULT

2 **Howling Winds:** The fans are shivering in the stands as a ferocious gale blows steadily down the pitch. Any pass attempts have an additional -1 modifier. Each coach rolls a D6 (re-rolling ties) – the wind is blowing down the pitch towards the losing coach's End Zone. Whenever the ball scatters for a kick-off or inaccurate pass, it will be blown down the pitch. Before making the Scatter roll, place the Throw-in template over the ball so that the 3-4 result is pointing in the same direction as the wind then roll a D6 and move the ball one space in the corresponding direction. Repeat this a second time then scatter the ball as normal.

3 **Freezing:** A sudden cold snap turns the ground as hard as granite (and not the 'astro' variety that players are used to). Whenever a player is Knocked Down, add 1 to the result of the Armour roll.

4-10 **Brisk:** It's rather chilly, but it is as close to perfect Blood Bowl weather as you can hope for at this time of year! This counts as a 'Nice' result for purposes of the Changing Weather result on the Kick-off table.

11 **Heavy Snow:** Visibility is low, it's slippery underfoot and it's impossible to spot tripping hazards, making it very difficult indeed to block effectively. Whenever a player makes a Blitz Action, their ST is reduced by 1 for the duration of that Action.

12 **Blizzard:** Between the snow, the wind and the icy ground, it is a miracle the game's still in progress! Any player attempting to move an extra square (GFI) will slip and be Knocked Down on a roll of 1-2, and only Quick or Short Passes can be attempted.

DID YOU KNOW...

A group of Wood Elves once tried to invent their own variation of Blood Bowl that took place in the sky on the back of Great Eagles. Although this led to a far more challenging passing game, it fell out of favour with players after several Wardancers attempted to tackle the opposing riders and were quickly dumped off their Great Eagle's back.





CHAT WITH THE RAT

Hackspit 'the Scribbler' Quillchewer is our ace Skaven reporter on the pitch, scrabbling about in possibly mythical places to bring us tales of enchantment from the touchline. This issue, our intrepid rat met with Friedrich von Kronnalburg, Professor of Creature Study at Altdorf University, and self-proclaimed expert on Feyology, to talk about the tree spirits of Athel Loren and their origins.

QUILLCHEWER: So Professor, Treemen have been in Blood Bowl for many years but several new types of tree spirits, and other creatures, have joined the game in recent years. Tell us about that?

FRIEDRICH: Certainly, my good rat. Simply put, tree spirits are unusual creatures, intrinsically bound to the forests that form them. Because of this, it is rare for them to venture outside of their arboreal residences, let alone tour the world as professional sports persons! Their unwillingness to do so comes from the fact that they are one with the forest and the forest feels lonely without them, crying out for their return. Such a phenomena is known as a 'Call of Nature'!

QUILLCHEWER: Good-good. So why do some of them leaf (Oh yes! We went there! – Ed)?

FRIEDRICH: Well, like every living creature, their motives can differ, but my research suggests that it is in fact related to the cries of the forest. You see, many Blood Bowl stadiums are built from wood and, from time to time, a builder will 'forget' to ensure their lumber comes from tree spirit-friendly sources. Such carelessness can cause parts of the forest to become separated from the

whole and these parts still cry out in loneliness! Those tree spirits who take to the field are more attuned to such cries and so arrive on the pitch in answer to those calls.

QUILLCHEWER: Hmmmm, so why do they stay and play?

FRIEDRICH: That is an interesting question. Firstly, not all that follow the cries do stay. Indeed, there are multiple instances of tree spirits and stranger creatures laying siege to Blood Bowl stadiums and reducing them to ruins. However, the life of a forest dweller is a relatively dull affair, especially for those spirits who have lived a long time. The Blood Bowl pitch however, as we all know, is a feast for the senses!

QUILLCHEWER: Yes-yes, the game is certainly unique! So it attracts these tree spirits?

FRIEDRICH: In a way, yes. Overwhelmed by the roaring crowds, cries of the players and the almost ritualistic display of a Blood Bowl match, the tree spirits are bewildered and unable to hear the cries of the trees they originally sought. In this moment, they believe it was the game that attracted them rather than the lumber used in the stadium's construction! Confused,

they join the game, discovering a wholly understandable and natural love of Blood Bowl!

QUILLCHEWER: So, what explains the recent upsurge of such spirits in the game?

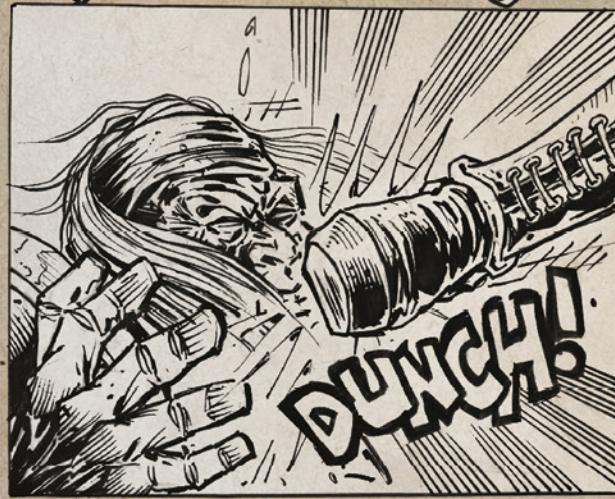
FRIEDRICH: Well, Treemen have always been seen as trend-setters within arboreal culture, at least where tree spirits are concerned – they are the oldest of their kind after all. So, when small groups of Treemen began migrating to the Blood Bowl field, word spread to Dryads and Spites and all other manner of creatures. They followed in the wake of these Treemen. If anything they've taken to the sport with even greater gusto, and have certainly changed the landscape!

QUILLCHEWER: Interesting, yes-yes! Well, that is an interesting take on the issue. Thank you for your time, Professor!

FRIEDRICH: It was my pleasure. If you would like more information, feel free to pick up a copy of my book – *Fey, Fey, Oh What Are They?*.

MIGHTY BLOW!

'WOOD FOR THE TREES'

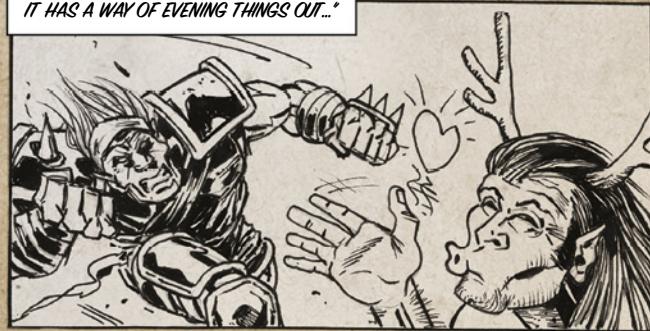


"ONLY TROUBLE WITH A WARDANCER IS THEY'RE SO TRICKY
TO GET A HOLD OF. OH, AND THEY ARE TOTAL
GROK-MUNCHERS. DID I MENTION THAT ALREADY?"



"AND AS THE SECOND HALF BEGAN,
IT DIDN'T GET MUCH BETTER..."

"THING ABOUT BLOOD BOWL, THOUGH.
IT HAS A WAY OF EVENING THINGS OUT..."



"AND JUST WHEN YOU THINK
YOU'RE UNSTOPPABLE..."







MORWYN SLENDERLIMB
LINEMAN, ATHELORN AVENGERS



CATHDRIEN WATERFALL
LINEMAN, ATHELORN AVENGERS



ISSAS SPRINGBLOSSOM
LINEMAN, ATHELORN AVENGERS



JEM GOLDSTAR
THROWER, ATHELORN AVENGERS



LUARN PROUDBOW
CATCHER, ATHELORN AVENGERS



NORAEN DORNVALE
WARDANCER, ATHELORN AVENGERS



EDRAEL WARWREN
CATCHER, ATHELORN AVENGERS



CELION RIVERSTONE
LINEMAN, ATHELORN AVENGERS



DAESETH FAIRBLOOM
LINEMAN, ATHELORN AVENGERS

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