

SKATEENLIGHT

Issue 3

gazette



SKAVENBLIGHT

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Skavenblight Gazette

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Voices from the dark

Greetings dear reader,

Welcome to this third issue of the Skavenblight Gazette webmagazine. It has come out some months later then you might have expected, which hopefully *crosses his fingers* is going to be a one-time thing. In the end, the editors are humans as well (although I have my suspicions about Seer Squeek regarding that one, but don't tell him I said that), so we will do our best to keep the periods between each issue as short as possible and in the meantime -in true Skaven fashion- bribe our readers with some splendid articles to look forward to.

One of them is the interview we had with none other then Alessio Cavatore. He has been so kind as to answer some of our questions and I for one am quite pleased with the resulting article. Of course, another article that especially those readers from the UnderEmpire.net community have been waiting for is the UnderEmpire.net Get Together, which was held in Antwerpen (Belgium) from the 21st to the 24th of July. It ended up as quite a 'mammoth' of an article (over ten pages of unedited text), so it ought to give everyone out there good reading material for a while. I think that many of the Skaven readers who missed out on the event will skip directly to that article, completely skipping this editorial, and, to be honest, I can't blame them.

So, what will the future bring for the magazine?

First off, the Skavenblight Gazette is seeing an increase in the number of articles as the number of contributors keeps growing. Not only does this mean the magazine is getting bigger, but also that the overall content will become more diverse. So, next to the articles based on the Warhammer Fantasy system, the editor team is looking to expand the content with reviews of Black Library novels, articles on Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay material, but also more on the Specialist Games (those who know me could have seen that coming *grins*).

So, for those who are interested in helping out with this magazine, which is meant to be created by gamers for the gamers, feel free to check us out at the UnderEmpire.net community. The editors are always looking for contributors, whether it's articles, artwork, or pictures of painted models you can provide for the Skavenblight Gazette.

Now, as I have nothing more to add to this editorial, I need to go. Apparently, Seer Squeek has found out about my suspicions mentioned earlier in this editorial, and I can hear him coming my way. My advice towards all others who end up in a similar situation: Run like hell and hope he doesn't catch up with you, because warp-lightning hurts... a lot.

Enjoy the read and till next time.

Greetz

*Skaven Lord Vinshqueek a.k.a. "Vinz"
Editor*

Skaven Spells, Magic Weapons and Magic Armour

by Blood Vixen

This issue Blood Vixen delves into the arcane magic and science of the Skaven, with an analysis on the Spells and Magic Items available to the master race.



Spells

Skitterleap

Skitterleap is the first spell in the Skaven spell list, and as such is the spell that can always be taken. It is perhaps its most useful in the Storm of Chaos Clan Eshin variant list, where it can be used to warp multiple assassins around the table to better hit at enemy targets. The Grey Seer could use Skitterleap on himself for this purpose, but Grey Seers should not really be left out in the open, especially so close to the enemy.

In a standard Skaven list, Skitterleap is best used to rescue your precious characters from gruesome deaths. If there is a Blood Dragon Vampire Lord getting ready to turn your Battle Standard Bearer into rat-paste, the low casting value Skitterleap makes it ideal for reliably (almost!) getting him out of trouble.

In situations like this, it may be worth casting Skitterleap last, and with a warpstone token to add an extra power dice. Its low casting value can make it an easy target for a dispel.

Warp Lightning

When Skitterleap is the first 'default' spell, Warp Lightning is by far the standard work-horse of the Skaven magic list. Unlike some armies, we can plan around what spell we are likely to get, because our lower 'spell casters' only have access to the one spell!

Warp Lightning is stronger than a lot of other magic missile spells, but with the possibility of hurting the caster. Couple that with the choice to cast a low 5+ version or a deadlier 9+ version, and you have one of the most feared spells in the entire game. And quite rightly so. Warp Lightning does hefty amounts of damage to all but the toughest of opponents, and can decimate entire regiments in a single casting.

It is a magic missile, so the caster is going to need line of sight, which with new targeting rules, is even more dangerous a prospect than before.

Vermintide

When Vermintide works, it works really well. When it fails, it gives laughable results. The spell uses the large blast template, so it is possible to hit quite a number of units, especially against horde armies. However, the random nature of its distance, and the low strength of the hits, makes Vermintide a less reliable spell damage wise.

The upshot of Vermintide is that it can be a deceptive spell. Most opponents will pass on dispelling a spell that causes S2 hits, as it seems like such a weak offensive. With a bit of lucky rolling, you can make them pay for their mistake. By no means an ideal scenario, but it can weaken enemies enough for your Skaven to overwhelm them in combat.

Also, be careful casting this spell into combat. While it won't hurt the caster, all hits are randomised over enemy and friendly units alike, and you can do severe damage to your own troops, while the enemy remains unscathed.

Pestilent Breath

A S3 hit that does not allow armour saves is not something to laugh at. Pestilent Breath can be used effectively on small groups of well armoured enemies, especially if they have a fairly low toughness, such as Bretonnian Knights.

A Plague Priest with a Liber Bobunicus has access to this spell, and it can be used to bring down the rank bonus and outnumber bonus that well armoured enemies may get against the Plague Monks. This is certainly a bonus, as Plague Monks have no armour and are easy targets to any troops that remain to strike back.

Because it uses the flame template, Pestilent Breath requires the caster to be fairly close to hit. As such, it is probably not the best spell for a Grey Seer, as you would want to keep him out of harms way as much as possible. The exception to this would be when he is mounted on a Screaming Bell.

Death Frenzy

Nothing is more feared in the Warhammer world than Frenzied troops. Death Frenzy grants the Frenzy rule to any unit it is cast on, and if cast onto a unit already Frenzied they go into Death Frenzy.

A unit with Death Frenzy cast on it can be used to hold up a much tougher, expensive unit. Even if the unit is beaten in combat, simply cast Death Frenzy on them again to keep them in the fight. Large units of Slaves can be bought solely for this purpose.

The minor drawback is that when in Death Frenzy (having Death Frenzy cast onto a unit already Frenzied) the Skaven will lose up to 3 wounds a turn. With large blocks of Slaves or Clanrats, this is hardly a problem, but can start to negate the benefits when used on slightly more expensive troops like Stormvermin or Plague Monks.

Plague

The deadliest and hardest to cast spell in the Skaven magic arsenal, Plague is a real terror. With the ability to potentially effect the entirety of both armies, it is a spell that most opponents will commit to dispelling. As such, it can be a great first spell cast, eating away at your opponents dispel pool.

Plague causes toughness tests. Failing a toughness test means the model suffers 1 wound with no saves, so this spell is dynamite against tightly packed, low toughness opponents like Goblins. Even against Elves and Humans this spell packs a punch. It is multi wound and high toughness enemies, Ogres especially, that will shrug off the effects of Plague.

The spell has the potential to spread, not just to nearby enemy units, but your own troops too, so be careful. Skaven count among the ideal targets for Plague, single wound low toughness troops, and your opponent will know this. They will most probably know which units to hit first, too, so Plague can be a real double edged sword.

Magic Weapons

Fellblade

The blade that destroyed the Great Necromancer himself! Its a very expensive item, so only Lord choices can take it. But it does pack a punch, although it only gives benefits to the wielders strength, so high WS opponents may still avoid destruction. It does do D6 wounds, so you only have to land one wound to potentially kill your target.

As with anything of this magnitude of power, it does have its drawback. Each turn, there is a one in three chance the wielder will take a wound, with no armour saves. You could try and be tricky and also army your Fellblade carrying character with a Talisman of Protection, but it only offers a very slim chance of success.

The Fellblade is a popular choice in the Clan Eshin variant list, where the prevalence of Skitterleap spells allow the Fellblade wielder to get into combat almost from turn one. This does, however, carry all the same disadvantages and benefits of the Fellblade in the Warlord list.

The Gouger

A handy weapon that totally ignores armour saves. This is a great choice against armies that rely on armour, such as Bretonnians and Chaos Mortals.

It is fairly expensive, maxing out a Heroes item allowance in one fell swoop. In games where your opponent will be fielding a lot of armoured troops, it can be beneficial arming a Chieftain with The Gouger. However, it best suits a Warlord, where the high WS and Attacks can make a difference.

Blade of Black Fury

Another weapon that will quickly max out a Heroes magic item allowance. It is best used against weaker massed troops, where the higher statistics of the Skaven characters will make the extra attacks count.

When armed on a Warlord, pairing the Blade of Black Fury with the Bands of Power is a viable option. This can come as a nasty surprise to your opponent, especially in a Challenge where the Skaven player has charged.

Warpstone Stars

Particularly deadly in the hands of skilled assassins, Warpstone Stars can only be taken by Clan Eshin characters. With a range that exceeds most standard foot troops charge range, they can be used to effectively take down pesky enemy characters.

With the new 7th Edition targeting rules, the Warpstone Stars become even more useful. Enemy characters no longer have anywhere to hide from this flying poison death. Couple an Assassin with Warpstone Stars with a Grey Seer with Skitterleap, and you have a deadly little character killing team.

They are a thrown weapon, so the Assassin will have to get reasonably close to the enemy battleline to use them.

Weeping Blade

The counterpart of the Warpstone Stars, with the added benefit that any character can be armed with one. The additional point of Strength and the D3 wounds it causes means that anyone equipped with it is a fairly capable character killer.

Weeping Blades are fairly expensive, so you aren't going to get a lot of magical protection onto a Hero carrying one. But the additional Strength bonus means that it will be equally effective in the hands of Chieftains, Assassins or Plague Priests.

Cursed Blade of Delirium

This blade raises the wielders WS up to 10, making him the most reliable part of your army in Close Combat. It is best used against opponents with high WS, such as Elves, where the main obstacle to be overcome is actually landing the attack.

The main drawback is that the weapon is so expensive, and really, you aren't looking at a major change in your to hit roll. Even on a Warlord, you are not looking at a markable difference, though if you foresee having to face a real nasty like the Bloodthirster, it may be worth investing in.

Headsplitter

Headsplitter can be particularly nasty used in the right situation. Its strengths lie in reliably wounding enemies with a Toughness of 5 or more, particularly good at making any of the Ogre Kingdoms characters think twice.

The main drawback is that it only causes a single wound per shooting. Couple that with its fairly limited range, and you are looking at a weapon that can leave you dangerously exposed. Most enemies with a Toughness of 5 or more have a more than reasonable charge range and are not going to stand around for another few turns so you hit them with Headsplitter again.

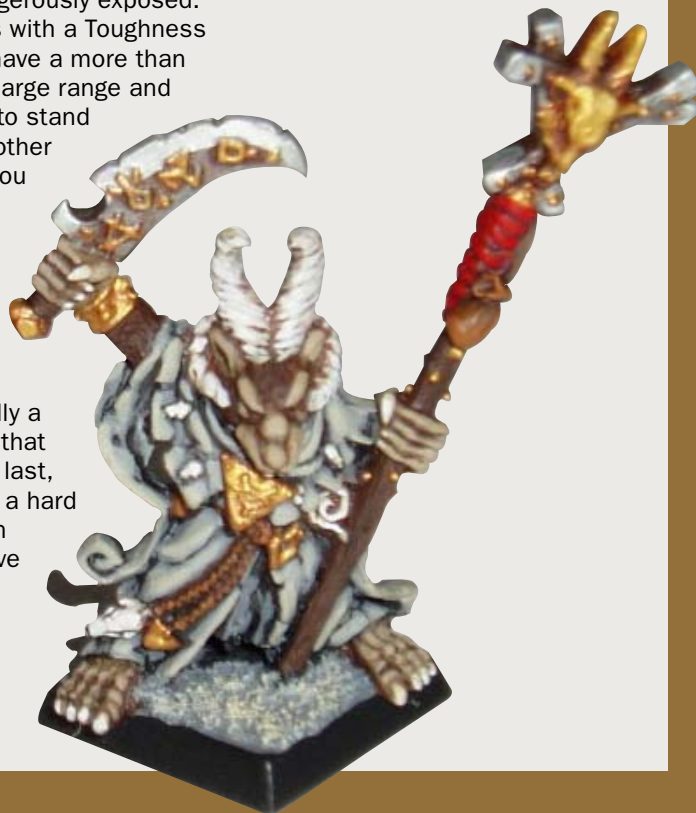
Desolate Blade

This is basically a great weapon that doesn't strike last, so if you want a hard hitting weapon that won't leave you prone to attack, this is it.

Dwarf Slayer

Dwarfs beware, your doom is here. This is the ultimate weapon in the Skaven arsenal for killing Dwarfs. It is fairly inexpensive, so you can arm a chieftain with the Dwarf Slayer and still have room for a few extra goodies.

Obviously only take this if you are fighting dwarves, as it is useless fielded opposite all other armies.



Bassik Dwarveripper says

The superiority of the true Masters are punctuated by their wizards. You can choose a mundane engineer that uses technology to cast a very powerful spell, or an almighty sorcerer lord. There is no middle ground.

Skaven magic is devastating compared to the regular lores, and you'll be inclined to take as much as possible. It seems like such an obvious choice.

But it's not the best choice.

Skaven magic, and all other wizards in the game, are expensive to field. Plus they take up a hero/lord slot you could have spent on a cheaper hero that's about as efficient.

Once the enemy reaches your battleline (or you charge the enemy, as you should), you want at least a Warlord and Battle Standard Bearer to make sure your dastardly clanrats won't run from combat.

Some people think they can go without a warlord, preferring the Grey Seer. Good for them, if it works. In my experience, it's nowhere near as effective as a big fighty horde, but to each their own.

Magic in the Skaven army, however, can be used best as support, not as a game winner.

Imagine you have a big horde marching towards the enemy line. Their arrows can't hurt you. I mean, what's 10 models dead a turn? Nothing!

But if they have fast cavalry and chariots prancing around, they are bound to get in your way. Just look at your opponent's smirk. Will you let him get away with this?

No! So zap those fancyboys on their ponies to the great burrow in the sky! Secure your flanks so you won't get any nasty side effects when you chase your enemy off the board.

The Grey Seer has access to more than Warp Lightning, and some of those spells are so useful I sometimes consider taking a Seer instead of a Warlord.

Then I bash my head on the desk till it goes away.

The master race has another huge advantage over other races: Warp Tokens and Irresistable Force.

Our Irresistable Force goes off on a 13 (but surely you know this?). With 3 dice, the most common amount of casting dice, you have more chance to get one off than any other army.

The Warptokens are free dice! Free! Never, ever pass the opportunity to use them. Sure, your Engineer could get the spell off with 3 dice. But 4 is even better! And since the Seer has 4, he might get a whole "extra" casting turn! Don't let the risk fool you. If you can't handle the stress, go play checkers.

And now, back to Blood Vixen, for a more in-depth (and much more useful) text about Skaven magic.

Blade of Corruption

A blade that slowly saps its targets life force, once an enemy has taken a wound, they have to roll at the beginning of each turn. If they roll 3 or under, they take a wound, with no armour saves.

The Blade of Corruption can be extremely useful against characters that replenish wounds by some means. Also, because of the lasting effect of the blade, even if your character loses the combat and flees, as long as he has caused one wound you still have a chance of taking down the target. Using this item against fairly tough characters is an option, as you can have the rest of your troops avoid the unit it is with until it dies. Without a tough character in the unit, the combats will become easier to win.

The only real downside is that this is a Pestilens only weapon, so your opponent can cleverly filter this weapons attacks against mundane opponents with single wounds by baiting the Frenzy Pestilens troops. Obviously, because this weapons abilities lie in causing additional wounds after an initial unsaved wound, having it attack single wound troops is the best way for your opponent to avoid it.

Languisher Sword

This item give your character the ability to always strike first, even when charged. A helpful ability at any time, this really comes into its own against opponents with higher Initiatives. The chance to strike first give you the opportunity to severely diminish the number of models that can attack back in the combat. The less enemies that get to fight, the better.

The only drawback is that, even though you are striking first, you still have to make successful to hit and to wound rolls.



Death Globes

The personal versions of the Poison Wind Globe. They can only be taken by Skryre, so you will only see Warlock Engineers with them, at least in the standard Warlord list.

They are not that reliable, being a template shot that scatters as a stone thrower, but they are reusable. So one warning shot may be enough to make your opponent think twice about getting too close.

The main drawback is that it is a thrown weapon, and so only has an 8 inch range, though this can scatter to much further. Misfires result in the thrower taking a hit, which can certainly cause problems. But at such a low point cost, it is worth putting them on a Warlock just in case he gets isolated from the main battle line. He can use them to take a few enemies down with him.

Blade of Nurglitch

Once this weapon has wounded its opponent, it sucks a point of toughness from them. This mean that subsequent wounds will be easier to inflict.

Obviously this is a weapon for use against multiple wound enemies, the higher the toughness the better. An advantage of the item is that it is fairly cheap, and can be taken by any character. One trick is to take a Cheiftain with the Blade of Nurglitch and Bands of Power against particularly tough enemies, such as giants. Activating the Bands of Power will mean that the Cheiftain has a better chance of wounding, and by the following turn when the Bands of Power have no effect, hopefully enough wounds have been caused that the enemies toughness has diminished enough for the Cheiftains reguar strength to allow a reasonable to hit roll.

Things-catcher

This item grants the ability to make wounds that cause Killing Blow. Useful against both characters and regular troops, though characters should be targeted above infantry.

The only real drawback is that the weapon requires two hands, so you are going to be striking last with it most of the time.



Magic Armour

Rust Armour

Rust Armour acts as heavy armour, so it can combine with other armour as normal. However, it allows the wearer to discount one hit that would ignore or cancel out an armour save.

This is a fairly expensive item, so the best choice would be to equip it on a Warlord, where magic weapons can complement the armours benefits. If you think your enemies battleplan will hinge on taking out your Warlord, especially if it is a war machine heavy opponent like Dwarfs or Empire, then Rust Armour is just the thing to foil their plotting. If they hit your character, he can just shrug it off and charge into battle.

The main drawback is that this armour is quite expensive, and on a Hero level character, they will be able to take little else.

Warpstone Armor

Another suit of armour that can combine saves as normal, this time fitted with a handy little retaliation strike. For each armour save made with the character wearing Warpstone Armour, the attacker takes one strength 4 hit.

This is useful if you are up against troops that you think will cause wounds that are easily saved, such as Goblins or Peasants. The retaliation strikes will thin their numbers a bit more and give you an upper hand when it comes to combat resolution.

Obviously, this isn't best used against opponents who you think will destroy your save, or against opponents who have a high toughness.

Cautious Shield

An item to confound your opponents in a challenge. The shield causes your opponent to lose one attack.

Against wizards and some champions, this is a viable option. The wielder can also choose to forgo all his attacks and use the shield to bring the opponents attacks down by two. This can be useful if you are facing a particularly mean character with only a few attacks. The aim is to render the character useless while your accompanying troops rack up enough kills to cause the enemy to flee.

Since this item only works against one opponent it has little use in standard combat. It is cheap enough to fit it onto any Hero character, who can then play the role of distraction for your opponents deadlier characters.



So that is the end of this edition. Next gazette I'll go into the remaining magic items I've yet to cover. I hope you enjoyed this article, as I'm doing this for the readers, not for me.

Next issue I'll look at the rest of the Magic Items list. Until then, thank you, and good night.

Alessio Cavatore

THE INTERVIEW

Greetings dear readers,

As you might have read in the previous issue, the Skavenblight Gazette had the honour to interview none other than Alessio Cavatore. He has been so kind to take some time in answering some of our questions, varying from the background of the Skaven to some rules questions... So, without further blabbering from my side (and as such, to ensure I won't be stabbed in the back for doing so), I present to you, The Interview.

On behalf of the editors,
Skaven Lord Vinshqueek

SG: The crew of the Skavenblight Gazette is honoured that you've taken the time to have this interview with us. An obvious question to start with, but have you heard of the webmagazine and the UnderEmpire.net community before and what are your experiences with online communities (including their initiatives, such as webmagazines) in general?

AC: I heard of the UnderEmpire several times before, but it's now a few years since I have decided to stop reading internet forums ('cause life's just too short!).

SG: If you were given a 'carte blanche' when working on the Skaven armybook for the 7th edition, what would the army eventually look like? What is your vision/ idea of how the Skaven army ought to be in terms of sticking with the background, but also on the battlefield?

AC: I'd simplify the army, cutting down on some of the more baroque special rules. I'd fix a couple of blatant mistakes (Ratling Guns and the Warp Lightning spell being too good...). In general I'd make the army less shooty, making close combat troops more appealing.

SG: While the gaming community only sees the products with the release of a new army, the process itself of going from start to release is something practically no one outside Games Workshop witnesses. How exactly does such a process work?

AC: It's a very complex balancing of creative drives and commercial needs... And it changes for every product, so I cannot tell you how it works exactly (nobody knows!).



SG: After the release of the 6th edition Skaven armybook, the Skaven have gained an infamous reputation due to the 'Skaven Armies of Doom' that have had a great presence in different tournaments. These armies consisted of a seer-council (Grey Seer on a Screaming Bell backed up by three Warlock Engineers; quite similar to the Eldar with a Farseer backed up by several Warlocks in Warhammer 40k) and was backed up by as many Clanrat units as possible, in order to field a line of Ratling Guns that would put an Empire Engineer to shame. With the release of the 7th edition, Warlocks no longer serve as little powerdice generators and weapon teams have become easier targets for enemy missile fire. Still, what sort of effect do such strong responses have on the design process of a new army and what can we expect for the 7th edition Skaven armybook to see from this?

AC: I see those armies as a failure on my part at playtesting stage. We were absolutely too nice when testing the Skaven and did not push the army to its limits, a mistake that should not be repeated in the future.

SG: During the process of creating an army, each decision made will eventually effect the gaming experience of many thousands of people all around the world. While everyone from the Games Design staff are the best in what they do, odds are that there will be moments when a decision is made that will generate a fair amount of negative responses. (An example from where I live would be the release of the Mechanized Horse and Rocket Battery, which had many believe Empire was taking its first steps to becoming the first 40k army in the Warhammer Fantasy setting). If you look back at everything you have done with Games Workshop, do you have certain moments where you think "I really should have done that differently"? Next to that, how do you handle such moments afterwards?

AC: Funnily enough, the worst army I've ever written from a balance point of view is the same army that is my favourite in terms of background: the Skaven! It's a heavy weight to carry, and I'm really looking forward to the day when I'll be able to fix them!

SG: If a Warpfire Thrower fires into combat and the models in the front ranks of the units are hit as well as other models in the combat that aren't in the front ranks, are hits distributed amongst the regiments for only those models in the front rank hit or for all of the models in the units that are hit?

AC: The entire unit, not just models in the fighting ranks.

SG: Is the Horned Rat a god known solely to Skaven, or is it much like, say, Khorne, where he appears in many cultures under many guises and names?

AC: Many theories exist regarding his nature. For example, some scholars even maintain that the Horned Rat is just one of the manifestations of Nurgle... The truth is out there!

SG: There has been a tendency to refer to Skaven as 'chaos rat-men' (the Warhammer 7th Edition rulebook and Mark of Chaos are examples) in the background and descriptive texts. Is this a definite statement that the Skaven are indeed Children of Chaos, merely a chaos mutation gone unchecked? And if so, how is it that the Skaven differ so wildly from other creations of Chaos in their behaviours (such as their tendency towards organisation, politics, and other un-chaosy things).

AC: Daemons, magic, undead, monsters... The World of Warhammer is permeated by the energy of Chaos, and every race and culture is influenced by it. Some more than others, of course, and the Skaven certainly are an example of heavy influence (particularly because of their use of Warpstone). Chaos rat-men is an expression that a scholar in the Old World could use to try and link Skaven with Beastmen, but that does not make them part of the armies of Chaos. They are quite independent.

SG: When reading background pieces regarding the Skaven (either novels from the Black Library, articles in the White Dwarf or pieces in the Armybook), I can't help but notice that an awful lot of it is written from the perspective of those that observe the Skaven and not of the Skaven themselves. While the ratmen aren't known for research on that matter, it does leave many parts of the Skaven background unknown. A few examples that come to mind would be the actual non-combatant structure of the clans (food production, offspring, etc.) and information on how some of the lairs and strongholds are built. During the aftermath of the Storm of Chaos campaign in 2004, the word was that the timeline would no longer progress. Does this mean we can expect to see a more in depth look into the Skaven background, either as separate pieces in the Armybook, or as additional background material in the form of Black Library books?

AC: There is a very simple reason why we don't write from a Skaven point of view – Skaven speech is fun for a few lines, but it would drive the reader insane for any longer! Clear-clear man-thing?

I am not aware of any plan to expand the Skaven background, but you should probably ask someone at Black Library for a definitive answer.

SG: In previous editions of the Skaven army book, the Vemir Lord in the army list was basically a combat specialist, while accompanying background suggested that they were manipulators, schemers and commanders of Skaven. Will we be seeing the Vermin Lord make any kind of a return, and if so, will it appear as more than just a combat oriented Greater Daemon?

AC: Well, they were powerful spellcaster too... I always loved the combo of Vermin Lords joining units of Rat-Ogres which included a hero with Skavenbrew!

I don't think they are going to make a return any time soon...

SG: Are there any plans to make the next Skaven army books list more Greater Clan oriented? Say, making the standard Warlord customisable so that he has attributes that reflect a certain clan? Will we see the option to field a viable Greater Clan army at all, or will the book continue to focus on the 'generic' Warlord Clan composition?

AC: I'm afraid the Eshin Assassin behind me is shaking his head, which means I cannot answer this question... (SLV: Mik, get out of there!)

SG: With the introduction of unreal inventions such as the Clockwork Horse and Rocket Battery into the Empire army, where does this leave the Skaven in terms of battlefield tech? The Skaven are the masters of bizarre and outlandish machinery, but that title looks like it is slowly being stripped from them. Are there plans to 'amp up' the technologies in the Skaven army?

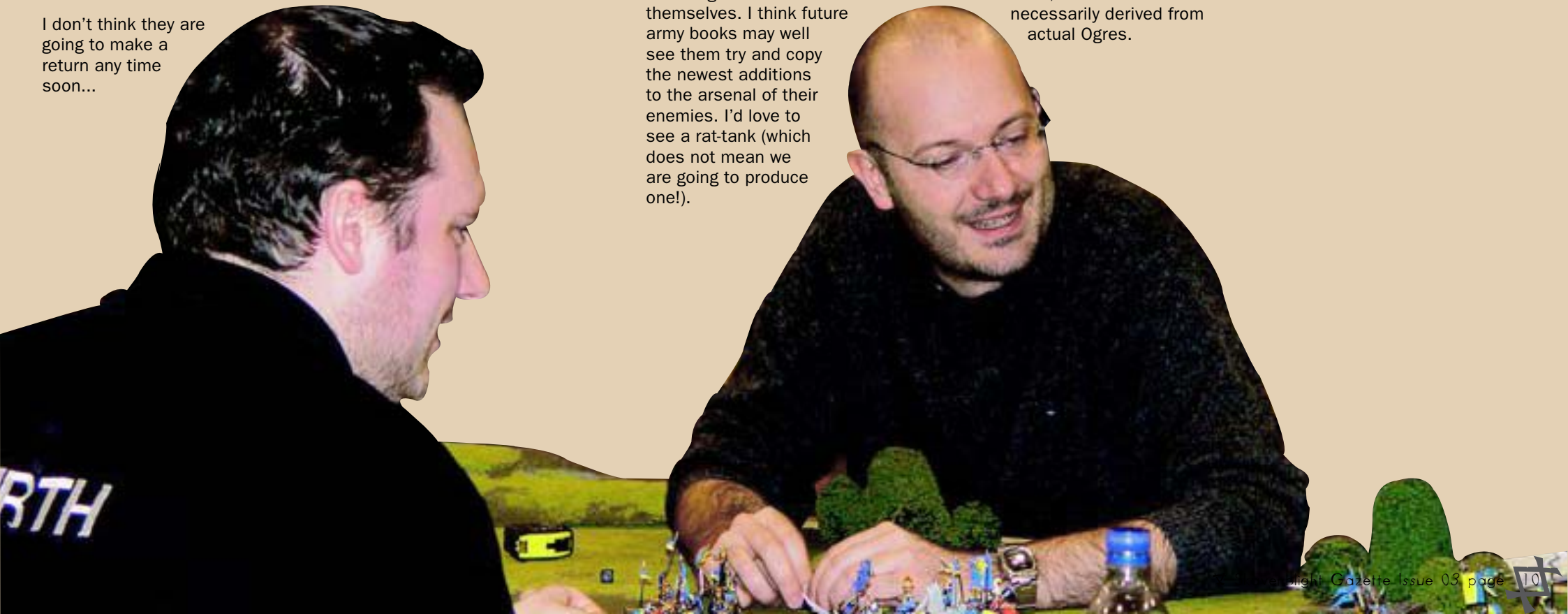
AC: Well, the Skaven always scavenge and copy the technology of other races and "improve" it with their warp-science, but they are not great innovators themselves. I think future army books may well see them try and copy the newest additions to the arsenal of their enemies. I'd love to see a rat-tank (which does not mean we are going to produce one!).

SG: Recently Ogre Kingdoms was released, giving a whole new look and feel to the Ogres of the Warhammer world. With this in mind, do the current Rat Ogres need to be changed in some way to make its new Ogre heritage more apparent, or is it assumed that the Rat Ogres are merely so far along in Moulder's chain of mutations that only the greater size and strength of an Ogre is retained?

AC: I think 'Rat-Ogre' is a term loosely used by humans to refer to the larger creations of Clan Moulder, which are not all necessarily derived from actual Ogres.

SG: If the Plague Monks originated in the steaming tropical climate of Lustria, why do they wear such heavy robes? Surely they would be the least clothed Skaven.

AC: It's a religious thing...



Analysis of Skaven Weaponry

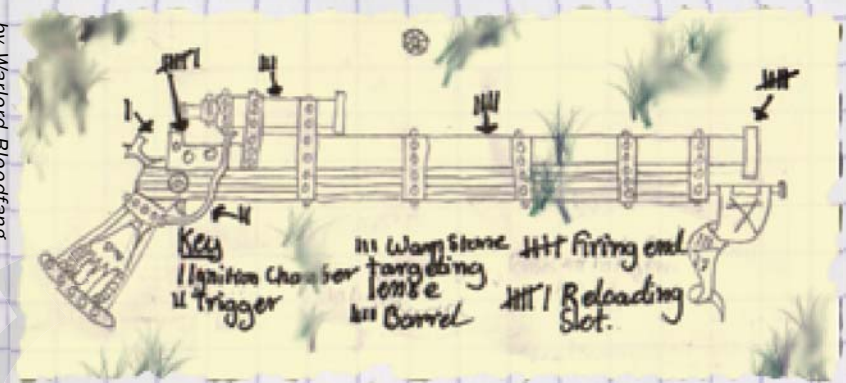
By the request of Lord Morskitter and as a gift to the almighty council of 13, I have been given the most humble task of researching the vast array of Skaven weaponry and recording my findings.

The Warp-lock Jezzail has been in use by Clan Skryre for a long time, it first being developed in our workshops and being refined to the point where it is completely reliable in the hands of an experienced gunner. What has ensured the Jezzails long history has been the amount of damage it can deliver in the form of its special 'Refined Warpstone Shots'. The Refined Warpstone Shots have been carefully modified by top engineers so that on striking a non-giving surface at speed they will release their latent warp-energy into the surface they strike. In layman terms this means that the Refined Warpstone Shot explodes in a concentrated area, namely the hole that it creates upon contact with the target, causing medium rupture to the surrounding tissue and infecting the resulting wound with warpstone shards that the other lesser races find so hard to resist, making the healing process much more difficult.

Research is continuing into possible different combinations of Warpstone and refinement with other materials, hopefully making these new shots even more devastating though experiments have not gone completely as planned as the recently tested 'Refined Warp-concentrate Shots', attempting to reproduce the effects of a Warp-Fire Thrower, though at long range, have not gone well and have resulted in the demise of the slave test subject about 95% of the time, the small 5% managed to fire the Jezzail without any problems but when the shot struck the target, an unstable balance of chemicals and warpstone caused a massive explosion to go through the entire chamber, killing the slaves and collapsing the tunnel. Excavations are continuing to see if anything is salvageable.

The Warp-Lock Jezzail is manned by a team of two Skaven, one being trained in the Jezzails use and the other learning from the first and acting as spotter for enemy troops and holding the shield support for the Jezzail to rest on. On the battlefield the Jezzail team is not hindered at all by the weapon, being able to keep up with clanrats due to the weight being distributed across two Skaven instead of one.

by Warlord Bloodfang



The process of firing the Jezzail requires the use of a special, modified version of the short-things 'black-powder', this powder is quite volatile and after many inconclusive experiments Clan Skryre successfully combined the black-powder with warp-stone powder, this enabled us to far outstretch the limited distance of the stunties Thunderer teams and still keep enough momentum upon the shot to still be able to take down a Chaos Chosen Warrior. The instability of the resulting Warp-stone powder results in the small chance of malfunction mentioned at the start of this document, but this is immaterial when compared to the Jezzails ability to mow down enemy troops while still remaining far back enough so that the Jezzails could be rescued and prevent their fall into enemy hands by careless/traitorous Warlords.

As the results of my research have shown, the Warp-lock Jezzail has a long and glorious history, among the best of Clan Skryre's inventions and has proven its worth to us all over and over again on the battlefield. Despite the odd case of the Jezzail malfunctioning and the team's cowardice overpowering their sense of duty to their Lord, I can assure you all that these are just isolated occurrences and have nothing to do with Clan Skryre though they could possibly be the workings of a rival clan hoping to displace a rival.

May the Horned Rat help us to the Great Ascension!

High Warlock Engineer
Squeak-Spark

Squeak Spark

The Playbook of the Rat Part 1

by Skaven Lord Vinshqueek

Bloodbowl is the game of Fantasy Football, combining sport with lots of slaughter and entertaining violence. It's a mixture of American Football and Rugby set in the world of Warhammer Fantasy, but also the only Specialist Game with a worldwide organization in the form of the NAF. In 2002 I have begun playing bloodbowl with several friends in my hometown, though with the start of college the league we had started ended just as quickly. Yet, after three years I accepted an invitation to participate in a tournament and in February 2005 I visited the Dutch Open with (at that time) a Dwarven team. Naturally, I got trashed in many different ways, but I was struck by the bloodbowl virus and it would never let me go again.

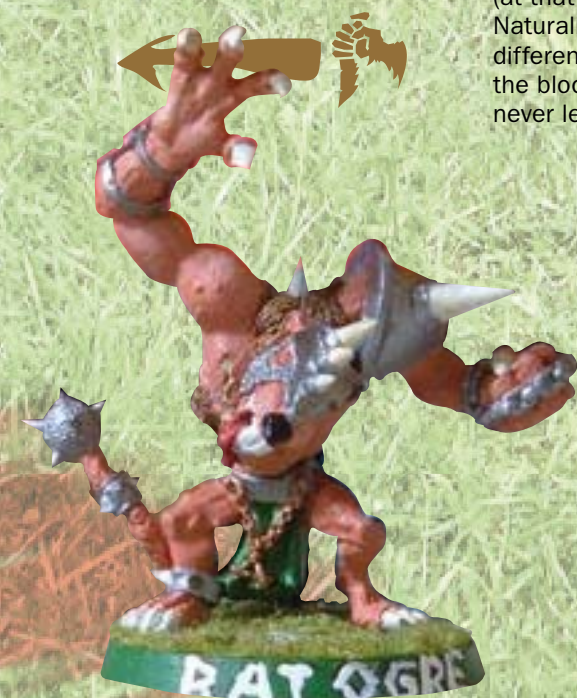
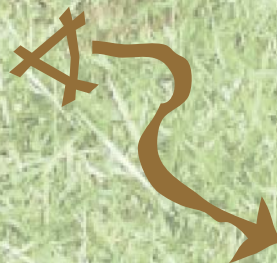
Off course, as a member of the Skaven community you can not expect to continue playing with Dwarves and expecting others to keep their blades away from your back. For over a year now, I have been using the UnderEmpire.net Supersonics Skaven team and have had my fair share of losses, but also some decent victories. This article will go through the basics of creating a Skaven bloodbowl team for both leagues and tournaments, a look in the future with team development with as last bit basic deployment and plays for the Skaven team.

The Skaven team

Playing a Skaven team can at some times have similarities to flipping a coin. It is possible to claim considerable victories, but at the same time you can just as easily suffer horrendous defeats. Yet, the team has with the gutter runners amongst its ranks one of the fastest scoring players you can lay your hands on and with its cheap linerats still has the possibility to flood your opponent with a mass of 'expendable' troops. The Skaven will always be one of the races that in general is capable of claiming the title in a tournament and the tally of victories they have claimed in the history of the NAF speaks for itself. However, one still needs to master their strengths in order to be harvesting those trophies.

Drafting your players

Before beginning to write down your roster, it's important to first look at the options you have. Go through the strengths and weaknesses of each player in order to define the role they can perform in your favoured playing style. Are you going for a running game or will you let your opponent walk towards you, where you will pass the ball into the hands of a gutter runner at last moment to see it running straight towards the endzone of your opponent. In order to look for possible ways to built up your team, we will go through the list of players and look at their possibilities.



0-16 Linerats:

Mv7 St3 Ag3 AV7 @ 50.000 gp

Skills: None (General)

Pros:

- cheap as dirt and easy to replace
- good for assisting the key-players

Cons:

- no skills when starting out in your team
- limited skill choice for development

Summary: The linerats are the backbone of a Skaven team and are those that will be doing the majority of the work during a match, from plugging holes in your lines to lending assists and as with every sneaky Skaven, they most certainly know how to foul. Just ensure you don't need to rely on them in a key-play to score a touchdown (unless you would still have more then enough re-rolls to 'correct' their errors) and they will show their worth time and time again.

0-2 Throwers:

Mv7 St3 Ag3 AV7 @ 70.000 gp

Skills: Pass, Sure Hands (General, Passing)

Pros:

- re-roll for both picking up and throwing a ball

Cons:

- agility three means they need to be kept out of tackle zones
- low armour makes them easy to knock out when blocked

Summary: Throwers are the quarterbacks of a team, the Skaven that keep coordinating the offense when chaos and anarchy rule the pitch. As they begin with the Pass and Sure Hands skills they are the members of your team that will ensure any ball that ends up in your half of the field is quickly passed towards a gutter runner, before it speeds off towards the opponents endzone. Though, ensure they are shielded off from any potential action involving a fist or boot from your opponent, as this is not where their strength lies.

0-4 Gutter Runners:

Mv9 St2 Ag4 AV7 @ 80.000 gp

Skills: Dodge (General, Agility)

Pros:

- (very) fast scorers
- access to good skills

Cons:

- low strength and low armour
- are expensive to replace

Summary: The true stars of the Skaven team are the gutter runners, who are amongst the fastest players on the bloodbowl pitch and with their agility of four are fairly adept at dodging through tackle zones. Yet, this agile movement comes at a price, as their low strength and high scoring potential makes them a prime target for enemy blocking actions. Though, with decent development and access to the general and agility skill lists their development can make them reliable scores.

0-2 Stormvermin:

Mv7 St3 Ag3 AV8 @ 90.000 gp

Skills: Block (General, Strength)

Pros:

- armour value of eight makes them reliable in both offense and defence
- only player with access to strength skills (guard, mighty blow)

Cons:

- aside from the rat ogre most expensive player
- maximum of two stormvermin at all times

Summary: The stormvermin can be considered the 'elite' amongst your offensive/ defensive line, as their armour value of eight and starting block skill makes them the best blockers you can begin with. Once they begin to gather experience points and get those important skill rolls, this will improve as with guard or mighty blow they will be able to knock some of the opposition off the field and give your team the numerical advantage. Though, the main downside will be their cost, which makes them the hardest to replace when they die.

0-1 Rat Ogre:

Mv6 St5 Ag2 AV8 @ 160.000 gp

Skills: Loner, Frenzy, Mighty Blow, Prehensile Tail, Wild Animal (Strength)

Pros:

- high strength (multiple block dice)
- prehensile tail to make dodging more difficult

Cons:

- very high cost
- has lost access to the general skills list
- can not always make use of a re-roll

Summary: While I am personally not a fan for employing rat ogres in a Warhammer Fantasy battle, they are a gift from the Horned Rat on the bloodbowl pitch and remain to have a constant presence in my bloodbowl team. Their high strength makes them an obvious choice for breaking open cages and combined with its prehensile tail, it can create a living hell for your opponents ball carrier. Unfortunately, the creature also has several drawbacks with for starters lacking the block and dodge skill, making each blocking action a gamble. Add to that the fact he's a loner (which means you won't always be able to correct any misses with a re-roll) and the rat ogre might just as well make a mess of your game plan.

Starting line-up

When creating your line-up, there is a big difference in doing so for a league or for a tournament. A very basic comparison would be that leagues are intended for a longer period and you will have to think ahead in terms of development and purchases, where tournaments (in general) are a series of one-off games where your team 're-sets' after every match and you can give one/two players in your team (either by choice or rolled for) gains a skill. Though, I do have to say this is a system commonly used in NAF tournaments and it might be the case that some readers have not played under this system yet.

League teams

A line-up usable for leagues would be as following:

- 2 Stormvermin
- 3 Gutter Runners
- 1 Thrower
- 6 Linerats
- 3 Re-Rolls
- 3 Fan Factor

The team mentioned can be put together with all models available in the boxed set. It is not suggested to begin with a rat ogre, as with the introduction of the 5th edition bloodbowl the cost for this beast has gone up, making them a real point-sink when purchasing at the start of the league. Instead, the format mentioned aims for a mass of models available and has a solid core of gutter runners. When these are maximized, your opponents will need to worry about all of them, as each gutter runner has the ability to score very, VERY fast.

Tournament teams

As mentioned earlier in the article, tournaments are (in general) a series of one-off games, which means you do not have to worry about the long-term development of your team. This means you can permit losing some more expensive players during a match, as you will be able to use them again in the next one. The result of this is that during tournaments, you will see fan factor having a minimal presence. On the other hand, re-rolls and key-players like gutter runners are more and more the options that many a Skaven coach will employ.

TR100 tournament:

The following team is usable for tournaments or one-off games with a teamrating of 100 (i.e. you have \$1,000,000 gp to spent).

- 2 Stormvermin
- 4 Gutter Runners
- 5 Linerats
- Apothecary
- 3 Re-Rolls
- 1 Cheerleader
- 1 Assistant Coach

What many will probably notice is an absence of throwers, which has been done due to the presence of the gutter runners. In the end, these are the players with a higher movement and agility, making them far more dependable. Even while the throwers have a re-roll for picking up and throwing the ball, the gutter runners will usually be doing both actions on a roll of a 2+. As they start with four on the pitch, this means your opponent is forced to deal with all gutter runners at the same time, as only one is required to score a touchdown and all have the capability of doing so.

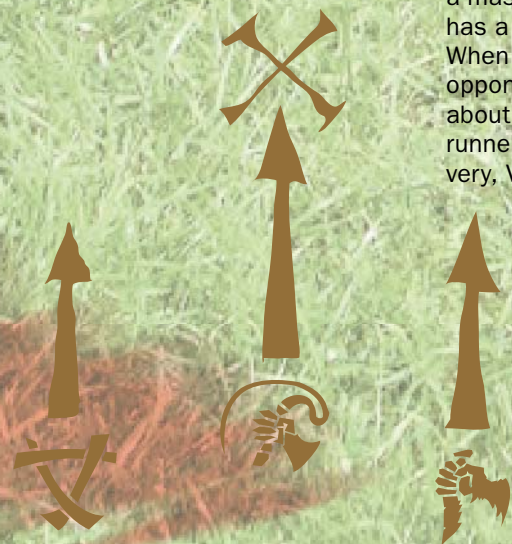
The choice for picking a cheerleader and assistant coach instead of fan factor is done because you do not have to worry about team development. This means that the only thing it will have effect on is the kick-off table. If your opponent has the FAME (meaning more fans have shown up to support his team), the bonus he/ she gets will be at most a +2. Cheerleaders and assistant coaches on the other hand are basically a cumulative bonus and therefore have a greater impact on the kick-off table then the fan factor will have.

TR110 tournament:

The following team is usable for tournaments or one-off games with a teamrating of 110 (i.e. you have \$1,100,000 gp to spent) and the format I have been using the past year with moderate succes.

- 1 Rat Ogre
- 2 Stormvermin
- 4 Gutter Runner
- 5 Linerats
- 3 Re-Rolls
- 1 Cheerleader

Where I would never take a rat ogre in bloodbowl games at a teamrating of 100, the big brute will remain to be my first choice when creating a team with a teamrating of 110. Its high strength makes it a perfect choice for breaking open cages, but more importantly give you a decent 'punch' when facing other teams that have begun to take big guys as well. (From experience I can say that when facing four mummies when playing against Khemri team, you'll be glad to have the rat ogre). Again, the throwers are absent as is the fan factor, for which in both cases I'll refer to what has been written with the teamrating 100 team.



Team Development

As you play a couple of games, the players of your team will generate starplayer points and at some point 'level', meaning they either get an increase on one of their statistics or gain a new skill. This is done by rolling two dice and refer to the Improvement Roll Table. Should you roll a double (i.e. 1, 1 or 2, 2 etc.) however, you may ignore this table and -even if you rolled a characteristic increase- take a skill from any skill category either from the Normal or Double column in the profile of that player. So, you'll notice that it's pretty important to know what skill would suit the role that player has within your team!

Please do note that this part of the article is aimed at the development of your team during leagues. The reason for this is that the ways teams develop during a tournament tends to vary considerably between tournaments itself. What you will read is still usefull when participating in a tournament as the same rules of Bloodbowl still apply, though there might need to be used some 'tweaks' for this part of the article to suit the development of the team during the tournament you participate in.

Skills

Linerat

Normal skill categories: General

Double skill categories: Agility, Passing, Strength, Mutation

Skill: Kick (1x), Block, Tackle

Double: Guard, Disturbing Presence

Linerats are your expendable troops, though at the same time can fulfill many roles. These are (almost) always the players that will be put on the line of scrimmage, so you can ensure your more expensive players will survive the initial onslaught of your opponents charging your way. Their role in your team is therefor one of support, meaning they fill gaps to ensure enemy catchers or runners can't freely run towards your endzone, but also hand out offensive assists in blocks.

Skills such as block and guard suit this role, as it means you can stand in tackle zones and anyone blocking near you still have to take the presence of that linerat into account. Another skill that might be of great use (though, being more annoying then really having a big impact) is Disturbing Presence. Formerly known as Foul Apperance, this skill gives a penalty to opposing players within three squares when passing, intercepting or catching. This can be of good use, as you might be

able to draw a line from one side of the pitch to the other, where any enemy player suffers the effects of the Disturbing Presence of your linerats.

One of the skills (though only needed one time) that should most definitely be chosen is the kick skill. The reason for this is that the kick skill means the ball will scatter a shorter distance during the kick off, which will always be in your advantage. First of all, your opponent has to walk towards the end of his side of the pitch, meaning that for his pass he will need to cover a long distance. Combined with the high movement of your gutter runners, this means you can quickly move into intercepting range. Should the thrower fumble, you can quickly pick up the ball, pass it to another gutter runner and score, while all the enemy players are still a fair distance away.

Thrower

Normal skill categories: General, Passing

Double skill categories: Agility, Strength, Mutation

Skill: Nerves of Steel, Block, Accurate, Leader

Double: Big Hand, Strong Arm

A thrower fills the role of quarterback, hanging in the back of the field and picking up the ball to pass it towards one of your

gutter runners. As mentioned earlier, their role is purely one that involves the 'pick up and delivery' of the ball and as such, should be kept away from any blocking action as much as possible. Still, it might happen that enemy players arrive into your side of the field fairly quick and place a series of tackle zones around the ball. In that case, it is handy to ensure you gain skills that ensure the thrower gets no penalties for picking up and/ or throwing, while at the same time as much positive modifiers as possible.

Nerves of Steel means you don't have to worry about enemy tackle zones for picking up, intercepting or passing. Skills like Accurate and Strong Arm means you find yourself with several positive modifiers when passing, meaning you can (more safely) deliver the ball towards your gutter runners. Still, if you score a touchdown this way, it would be pretty sour when your opponent kicks your thrower beneath the grass and into the mortuary each time you perform a play like this. It is as such advised to ensure you try to get Block before your thrower gains 16 starplayer points, to ensure he will also survive on the long-term of the league.



Gutter Runner

Normal skill categories: General, Agility

Double skill categories: Passing, Strength, Mutation

Skill: Block, Side Step, Sure Feet, Strip Ball, Sprint

Double: Nerves of Steel, Dauntless, Two Heads

Gutter Runners are really the stars of a Skaven team. They are quite versatile players, as they are most likely the group of players in your team that will gain the most Improvement rolls during a league. As such, you have more than enough ways to have them progress and therefore, it is also wise to think ahead on what role you want your gutter runner to have within your team. Does it needed to be a Catcher (thus running into the endzone and waiting for the ball to come its way), should it be a Runner (dodging through enemy tackle zones and simply carrying the ball towards the endzone), or should it be a rapid blitzer (blocking single enemy players).

While all these options means you can pick from a long range of skills that would suit a gutter runner, there will always be a few that a Gutter Runner definitely needs. One of those skills is the Block skill. Turning your Gutter Runner into a blodger (the

combination of Block and Dodge, meaning your opponent has to roll a 'Pow' to ensure the gutter runner is knocked over) is one of the first goals you should have with a gutter runner, whatever its role within your team eventually becomes. Side Step is a second wise choice, as this means you will always be the one determining which square your player is pushed into, meaning the chances you'll get knocked into the crowd are suddenly decreased to an absolute minimum.

Should you aim for a scoring gutter runner, skills like Sure Feet and Two Heads mean you can more easily run through enemy tackle zones and cover longer distances more safely as well. As with the thrower, Nerves of Steel is a very usefull skill, as it means you don't have to worry about tackle zones when catching the ball (or intercepting a pass). Personally, I would only pick the Catch skill when you are through the most necessary skills, as with an Agility of four they are most likely to catch the ball on 2's in the first place.

You can also turn your gutter runner into a (fast) offensive players. In this case, Dauntless is a very usefull skill, as this will severely decrease the times your opponent can choose from two/ three blocking dice. Add Strip Ball to this and you can cover a great range of the Bloodbowl pitch to

retrieve a ball from the hands of an enemy player. A possible option (though not mentioned) would be the Horns mutation, as this gives an additional point of strength on blitzes. While I personally favour giving the Gutter Runners the role of catcher/ runner, the combination of dauntless and horns can at some times most certainly surprise your opponent.

Stormvermin

Normal skill categories: General, Strength

Double skill categories: Agility, Passing, Mutation

Skill: Tackle, Guard, Mighty Blow

Double: Dodge, Prehensile Tail

Stormvermin are the Blockers of your team. They are with Block and an Armour Value of eight tougher than your ordinary Skaven and can survive on the line of scrimmage, though it is not recommended to place them there. Their role is usually more aimed at taking out single enemy players and as such, the skill that suit their role usually have something to do with blocking. Tackle and Mighty Blow are both skills that boost the offensive capabilities of your Stormvermin. Being able to negate the Dodge skill of your opponent (if she, he or it has that skill) is quite usefull at many times and mighty blow might help you break that armour or kick them off the

field. If you look at the defensive capabilities of the Stormvermin, skill as Dodge and Guard are good choices.

Prehensile Tail is eventually more a bonus then really a must-have for a stormvermin. The -1 modifier for dodging out of the tackle zone is very usefull against low agility teams (basically anything that isn't an Elf) and might force your opponent to use a re-roll to ensure the Dodge succeeds. As such, the effect it has is more that of annoyance then really an asset. Still, if your opponent has a catcher or runner with the ball deep in your side of the field, that long tail might just be what you need to stop your opponent from scoring.

Rat Ogre

Normal skill categories: Strength

Double skill categories: General, Agility, Passing, Mutation

Skill: Juggernaut, Guard, Break Tackle

Double: Block, Pro, Tackle

The Rat Ogres are the powerhouse of your team. A high-strength brute that can thunder through many opponents, though at the same time they're somewhat of a liability. Since they lost access to the General skill category, Block is no longer one of the choices you can immediately make when you are allowed to make an

improvement roll for your rat ogre. This means we have to look very carefully at the skills available to him (or, as the gender of the rat ogre is somewhat unclear, would that be 'it' we are talking about?) and a fair replacement for the Block skill if you haven't rolled a double would be Juggernaut. This skill only works in a blitz action, but when doing so you can choose to treat a Both Down (where you don't suffer from when having the Block skill) as a Pushed Back instead.

Other skills that could be of good use are guard and break tackle, but when rolling a double for the first time, you shouldn't be thinking about your choice and immediately go for the block skill. A good second choice would be the Pro skill, as this allows you to re-roll a die without using (and perhaps losing) a team re-roll. In some cases it might happen that you still can't perform the re-roll, but if this happened you will at least still have your team re-roll, which is very valuable to any team.

Purchases

After having played some matches, your treasury will have steadily grown towards a considerable size and eventually the time comes to start spending some coins! While you might against more experienced teams benefit from the Inducements (more on that later), it is advised to ensure you have assets that will stay with your team for the full duration of the league. For this, we are talking about re-rolls, Fan Factor, Cheerleaders, Assistant Coaches, Apothecaries and off course, players to field on the pitch. The reason I mention this is that while Inducements give you some decent bonuses, it is important to look at what you have and not what you can get.

Therefor, ensuring you have on Apothecary (if you hadn't bought this yet when creating your team) and a decent amount of re-rolls (either three or four) early on in the league is a necessity for any Skaven team. The first will try to heal your injured players and the second will be usefull on many occassions. Aside from these two, always try to have enough players so you can lose a few during a game and in the end still field eleven players at the start of each drive. Last of all, additional fan factor, cheerleaders and assistant coaches can give you enough bonuses to ensure the kick off result will be in your favour.

Inducements

With the release of the fifth edition rulebook of Bloodbowl, the Inducements have made it onto the Bloodbowl pitch. These have been created in order to create more 'equal' matches in leagues when teams with a high amount of starplayer points in many cases had the upper hand during matches against teams with (much) lower starplayer points. In order to tackle this problem, a system has been devised where the value of each team changes per match, since players that have accumulated skills and/ or increased statistics are obviously worth more. This results in different values between this and this difference can be used by the underdog to gain Inducements. The full list of Inducements can be found on page 49 to 50 of the fifth edition of the Bloodbowl Living Rulebook, but let's do a short rundown:

- 0 to 2 Bloodweiser Babes @ 50,000 goldpieces each;
- 0 to 3 Bribes @ 100,000 goldpieces each;
- 0 to 4 Extra Team Trainings @ 100,000 goldpieces each;
- 0 to 1 Halfling Master Chef @ 300,000 goldpieces (except for Halflings off course);
- 0 to 1 Igor @ 100,000 goldpieces each;
- Unlimited Mercenaries @ variable values depending on the type of player chosen;
- 0 to 2 Star Players @ variable values depending on the starplayer chosen;
- 0 to 2 Wandering Apothecaries @ 100,000 goldpieces each;
- 0 to 1 Wizard @ 150,000 goldpieces.

When looking at this list, there are four Inducements that are likely to be used quite often, which would be the Bloodweiser Babes (+1 to recover from KOs), the Extra Team Training (one extra team re-roll for that match), Mercenaries (freelance players that can 'buy' a skill when hired) and Wandering Apothecaries (additional apothecaries for your team). These four Inducements will boost the performance of your team and ensure that you have enough players on the pitch to ensure they're not run over completely. Others do have their uses (except the Igor, as no Skaven will ever gain the Regeneration skill), but are more a bonus then a necessity when playing against teams with a higher value then yours.

Now we have reached the end of this first part, I hope you have gained some new insights on how to built up your Skaven team on the Bloodbowl pitch and some tips on their progression during a league or tournament. Next time, we will look at some of the basic offensive and defensive plays with the Skaven team.



Ask Seer Squeek

Skavenblight Gazette's very own Agony Uncle answering your questions

Dear Sir Seer,

I am a Stormvermin, and I'd like to know why I have to pay for my shield. The measly clanrats get them for free, yet I have to cough up good money to get one, as if I'm no better than a pathetic slave. This is clearly a failure in the system and should be resolved immediately.

S. Vermin

S. Vermin,

You will use what you are given, nothing more, nothing less. If you have such a problem with your equipment and are jealous of the clanrats and their shields, then maybe you should simply take one... that is unless you are afraid of a mere Clanrat. If so, I will gladly put you among the ranks of my own Clanrats where you can easily obtain a "precious" shield.

I will own you,

Squeek

Dear Seer (hey that rhymes!),

Why is it that when a grey seer role-plays, he seems to be able to cast different spells than when he's leading an army? Does he have a different magical manual for different situations?

Dear Sore Loser,

Even outside the battlefield, one should not try to disobey a grey seer. Personally I am not really a fan of those roleplay games... However, there are indeed some grey seers in our order that act as games masters or participate in a game or two. Apparently, some just get carried away and when things don't get the way they want to, they target one of their fellow players with one or two less common spells out of frustration.

It's not so much as a different situation, but not all spells are usefull on the battlefield.

I prefer the real thing,

Seer Squeek

by Seer Squeek

O great Seer of utmost intellect

Have you heard of the Farsqueaker 1300? Of course you have, great seer-seer. I found the Clan Skryre invention to be most interesting, and I have the warpstone token to pay-pay for it. However, I am sure you have heard of the risk that it has a tendency to blow up when a line connects. Should I get it anyway?

Thank you for sharing your limitless wisdom-intellect,

Warlord Linnal of Clan Spite

Dear spitefull tech-maniac,

If you wish to blow yourself up, go ahead.

However, I would recommend that instead of using it yourself, you get chieftain that you suspect of trying to overthrow you to answer it. If it blows up, good riddance. If it doesn't, they can take a message.

Seer Squeek

Dear Squeek,

Why is our god the Horned Rat? Horns don't seem particularly ratty. Why would the god for a race of ratmen be a goatrat?

regards,

doubting believer

Squeek,

Who are you to question the appearance of our god?! Must our god be like any common rat? Should he be of brown fur, hornless, and of no grand appearance so that he may be 'ratty' or whatever term you slaves use to describe yourselves?! No! All rats are not created equal little slave. You were born hornless and brown, marked by the great Horned Rat to be of little worth while my Stormvermin were born hornless but black, marked to be strong protectors of those such as myself who were born grey and marvelously horned, marked for greatness and power in the image of the Horned Rat himself. Now I suggest you run, for your question is heretical and I stand for no such things... and my pets love a good chase.

Coming for you,

Squeek

Greetings Seer Squeak,

Recently I have come to power in my clan. When our last warlord met with an unfortunate accident (which I know nothing about), I seized the initiative and imposed a strict rule over the clan. Because of fierce jealousy towards my newfound power, several aspiring chieftains have already been disposed of. However, recently I have had a suspicion that there are rats following me. I think I can hear pawsteps behind me... or when I turn around quickly, I see darting black shadows. Last night, all twenty of the Stormvermin which guard my den were found dead, stabbed with poison daggers, right outside my door. The door, however, which could easily have been forced, had not been touched.

I have a few questions. What do you think the chances are that assassins have been hired to kill me?

If so, why have they not gone on with it? If they could take on twenty Stormvermin, they certainly could have taken on my three-rat body guard that I travel which sometime when we were alone in the tunnels.

Finally, what do you suggest I do to protect myself from this threat?

A Nervous Dictator.

Dear Insecure Rodent,

What you are suffering from is a man-thing plot called April Fools, in some regions of the Old World also known as prank-night...

Apparently, the strict rule you have enforced upon your clan has led to the remainder of your chieftains finding trouble to relieve themselves of the stress they are enduring. (I mean, seeing your fellow comrats being 'disposed' by the new warlord is not an easy thing to deal with). As such, they have resorted to the use of prank-night by simply creating chaos within the hold of your clan on a scale not seen in a long, long time.

From experience with some of those figures within the Order of the Grey Seers, my tips would be to truly run when someone starts yelling 'The Rat Ogres are loose' (for that scar never fully healed) and try to avoid any entrants as much as possible... While throwing the droppings of a rat ogre seem funny to some, I can assure you that being on the receiving end of that, your opinion will be the exact opposite. Though, I can tell you grey seer Riskit will never be able to sit normally again. [Editor: For the health of our readers, we have cut out the page-long insidious laughter that followed this remark.]

My advice to you would be the following...

Go to the nearest Clan Skryre workshop and purchase two wagonloads filled with flashbombs. Carefully place them in a radius of fifty steps around your den and make sure that you're the only one that knows how to pass through that field of bombs without setting one off... The next time your chieftains will pull another prank-night, they will be in for quite a surprise when the vicinity around your den will lit up like a burning sun.

Always the practical joker,
Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek,

I have recently started to sneak into the Breeder chambers... I cannot help it. I am a mere Clanrat standard bearer under the lead of Snakkerikk Gnawtoun, but I cannot resist my desire to sneak into the breeding den. What should I do to avoid a most certain death in the chamber if someone would happen to discover what I do?

- Clanrat Geekk

Clanrat Geekk

Whatever it is that you do while in the Breeder Chambers, cut it off. That should sort your problem out.

It will, however, present a slew of new problems.

Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek,

I think my tail is plotting against me, I cant prove it... but it always seems there ready watching my every move. I cant just be paranoid, ever since the accidents. Anyways would it be a good idea if I cut my tail off and had a master moulder make me a new more loyal tail?

s'nkeep

s'nkeep

Your tail is a sacred symbol of the Horned Rat. Unlike many other 'higher' races that sport tails, we can learn to control our tails to use them as weapons, or to even hold weapons. This is obviously a gift by the Horned One. If your tail is trying to kill you, you must be doing something wrong. Something terribly wrong. So terrible the Horned Rat considers your life forfeit.

Let us try and discover what you have done that displeases him so. Just stand over here, no, over hear, just over this hatch. Don't mind the snarling and snapping of jaws below the floorboards. Now, where did I put the lever?

Seer Squeek

Seer Squeek,

Do you still want questions? If so, do you prefer rhetorical or philosophical questions?

And what I really want to know is, "What is your favorite food?"

Rusty Tincanne.

Dear (apparently) starting interviewer,

Seeing how asking someone who answers questions in a column whether he still wants to receive questions being a rhetorical question, you can safely assume that I will not be answering such questions at all. As such, from the two options you've given, my choice would go out to answering philosophical questions, such as "Would one really see the Horned One just before being blasted to bits by Warp-Lightning". For the past thirteen seasons, I have been trying to answer this question at the expense of many slaves. Don't worry when you're next in line as a test subject. It won't hurt... for long.

As to my favourite type of food, I have to say my favour goes out to the Elf-Things that live in the wood-lands. Aside from having this soft flesh that gives away this delicate aroma after being roasted for a full moon cycle, it is quite healthy due to the amount of fibre-intake. Finally, whenever I have faced them in battle, they always brought along a supply of wood with them for the kitchen fires, which made it so much easier to serve them as dinner.

Knows the joys of life,

Seer Squeek

Oh great Seer, I am in dire need of your advise.

Having recently crushed a rival clan due in no small part to my brilliant tactics, I am now posed with a perplexing conundrum.

I have taken many of their numbers prisoner but this is exactly the problem, there are just too many slave-things now in my lair to store them efficiently. I would sell them to Moulder but I am certain that they would mutate them and 'send them back' as it were.

Please aid me in this dark hour, I can barely move for fear of tripping...

W.L. Bloodfang

To W.L. 'Full of himself' Bloodfang

If you are certain that Moulder would 'send' your slaves back at you, then why not just do away with them all now? But that would be such a waste, would it not?

If you are having trouble with Moulder, perhaps selling your excess slaves to them at a bargain price will help smooth things over. If those slaves happen to be infected with some potent disease bought from Clan Pestilens, and you happen to forget to mention it, and some warpstone tokens happen to fall into my pocket, then all your problems should suddenly seem to be far less.

Never forget, I know the plan.

Seer Squeek



Venerable Grey Seer Squeek

My Eshin troops often face Tomb Kings, and in the desert there is not much cover except hills).

Those dead-things have a nasty habit of scaring my next-to-worthless Night Runners away. And the Gutter Runners close after. A tunnel team might emerge at the feet of a Bone Giant and run in terror.

Therefore I equip NR and GR mostly with ranged weapons, in order to do some killing from distance.

In bigger battles I field a BSB with our fearcausing banner, but that only helps 1 unit, and I can't get anywhere keeping lots of troops within 12".

My tunnellers have a fair amount of succes.

Assassin skitterleapt with Warp Stars works too, but my opponent gives his Hierophant Cloak of Dunes, and if he survives first throw, he is away, leaving one lonely expensive character amongst lots of unfriendly undead.

Ratogres I might try out, but I have limited special units. (plays 500-2500pts).

And that creepy Scorpion that comes after my general bothers me too.

So does your infinitive wisdom have some sparkling ideas for me?

Yours faithful (if paid) Morgoth, Clan Eshin, Squad of the Silent Star.

Dear Fired Adept,

One should remain always faithfull to a Grey Seer...

If your Night Runners or Gutter Runners run away from man-things that are already dead, I have pity for you on the day they'll have to report their actions to a Grey Seer. Failure is one thing, but downright incompetence is an act that clearly indicates the ranks of the slaves are the only position for them.

I suggest getting rid of them as soon as possible! For if you don't do this fast enough, it is you who might find himself waking up amongst their ranks.

Still, every problem is a solution in disguise...

The Hierophant is a very important character to the dead man-things, so if you Skitterleap an Assassin, you should immediately have it thunder into combat with it. Our Assassins are highly skilled combatants, so employing them within enemy lines to fling a couple of throwing stars at a character is something of a waste... Get it in combat and ensure it can't move anywhere.

In general, my advice would be to keep your general close to your main line of troops. Make sure that they won't run once they reach the enemy and once they are in combat, unleash the power of clan Eshin and make sure they can't hit you were it hurts: the flanks...

You only get one second try,

Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek,

What does the summoning of a Vermin Lord include? Does one have to perform a great ritual with many sacrifices (the more, the merrier), or just simply ask a Vermin Lord to accompany you, and then what does one do to unsummon a Vermin Lord? Just tell him to bog off? (Presuming that it wouldn't leave us on the wrong side of his glaive).

mebob

Dear foolish mortal,

To answer your question, I have to admit that I have never had a first-hand experience in summoning a Vermin Lord, for which I am quite glad. They are the daemonic forms of ancient Lords of Decay, who are wiser and more wicked than any Skaven alive, though still love the plotting and betrayal as they did when they were alive. As such, summoning a creature like that requires a dire situation with the presence of a Vermin Lord basically being a last resort.

The knowledge to summon a Vermin Lord is passed from one generation of Grey Seers to the other, meaning that the actual incantations can not be revealed in this column. However, I can assure you that unlike the things in the wastes north of Hell Pit or the thrice-cursed lizard-things in the lands of clan Pestilens, summoning a daemon does not require 'many sacrifices'. Unfortunately, it usually seems to take a liking in claiming the souls and lives of those who summon it.

In order to banish the Vermin Lord, telling him to bog off usually results in a series of quite entertaining moments, which brings up a few interesting memories from my days as an apprentice... Just make sure you are not the one being forced to say it.

Is happier casting warp-lightning,
Seer Squeek

Almighty Seer i have a question i need answered

My question is while reading the last issue of the Gazette i saw the Rat King section a wondered that if the king became frenzied would it get 5 extra attacks or only 1?

Vermitt stain

Vermitt

Don't you know? The King Rat is a myth, a story told to scare feeble slaves and Clanrats. Do you believe everything you hear?

But for arguments sake, lets say that the King Rat did exist, and that it did suffer Frenzy (like, say, if i cast a certain frenzy inducing spell on it). While the entire King Rat would become effected, it would only gain 1 additional attack. This could be considered to be in the interest of fairness, but in reality, with five rats frenzied, scrambling all over each other, it would only amount to one extra attack. The rest of the King Rats frenzied energy is spent fighting within itself.

Now, on to the matter of who has been telling you stories...

Seer Squeek

Do you believe everything you hear?

Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek

As a fairly powerful Chieftain in the employ of Clan Moulder I have a very high-stress lifestyle, however I have found a bit of mouldering and mutating beasts always helps to calm me down. Self-taught I have created a couple of pieces I really am proud of, however recently I have noticed just how many mutants and stuff have been wandering around my lair. Now normally this would not be a problem but they are eating my clanrats and slaves and it's getting irritating any ideas?

Shade the exiled one

Dear Moulder wannabee,

I have spent the snow season in Hell Pit and from my experience there, I notice that during your leisure time with the 'bit of mouldering' you have forgotten the one most important thing anyone from clan Moulder with even the least bit of control over minions should have: Cages...! One can either store precious goods, weaponry, slaves or mutants in them and won't have to worry about losing anything.

Luckily for you, the Cult of the Horned Rat has recently acquired a series of cages from minor clans that have seized to exist and I can put in a good word for you. I do not ask for much in return, just that you owe me a favour every now and then.

Always increasing his influence,

Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek,

My clan has been very much blessed by The Horned One to have recently come in the possession of a Screaming Bell. Since we have aquired it though, that wackjob of a bellringer just won't stop ringing it! Sleeping has become difficult and I've caught myself yawning mid-battle a lot lately. Something has to be done, but first I would like to ask the advice of your worshipfullness on how to deal with this problem in a discrete manner, whilst not offending He Who Gnaws On The Roots Of Eternity.

Thank you for your help,

Sleepless in Skavenblight.

Dear zombie,

What you are suffering from is the presence of an apprentice bell ringer, something that is common in times of great warfare. While the Screaming Bells act as a ward for the Seers that command it, this not always counts for the minions that ring the bell. Therefor, the Cult occasionally recruits new bell ringers where you might indeed have one that becomes somewhat 'too' enthusiastic.

My advice would be to hire out the services of your Grey Seer and its Screaming Bell to a clan you hope to take over. Soon, they will be the ones suffering from a severe lack of sleep, not to mention the continuous ringing of the bell covering up any noise you make upon entering the territory of the enemy clan. I can assure you that the Horned One looks with favour upon those who use deceit against their foes and if not, perhaps a payment in the right paws (as in: mine) might mean a good word will be done for you.

Night-Night,

Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek,

I'm the proud banner bearer of our clan, but the sheer weight always makes me tip over and fall. How can I keep my head from tasting the dirt everytime?

Mallekha the Overwhelmer

Dear dirt-eater,

Apparently, the Horned One has other plans for you then a career as banner bearer. You clearly have missed the signs he has been giving and I would suggest to quit while you can as our deity is not known for its patience. Seeing how you have gained a great affinity with dirt and depending on how you inform the leader of your clan on your resignation, I see a bright future as an employee of the Skavenblight Warpstone Mines for you.

Knows your potential,

Seer Squeek

Seer Squeek,

A 'fellow comrat' gnawed off a piece of my tail yesterday after he lost his warpstone snuff to me in a gamble game. It won't stick anymore? What should I do, as I'm falling in disgrace when I'm in between all my other comrats, they are always laughing at me!

A tailless rat

Dear stumpy,

Upon reading your letter, I can not help noticing that you have gotten yourself into this situation, because you let yourself get into this situation. Since the Horned One does not smile upon those who take their rights into their own hands, I find it perfectly justified for your comrats to laugh at your... inconvenience. Still, chaos amongst the minor clans is a favourite hobby of mine and therefor, I have the following advice for you.

The man-things have a saying that goes "Don't get mad, get even". If your comrats laugh at you, because you are the only one that has lost his tail, simply make sure that everyone in your pack starts losing their tail. Gnaw them off, cut them off and within a few moons, you suddenly have a very interesting collection of tails. Many of the man-thing cultists will pay much tokens to own a tail like that and you will quickly ascend in the ranks of your clan once more!

I collect ears too,

Seer Squeek

The UnderEmpire.net Get Together - 21st till the 23rd of July 2007

by Skaven Lord Vinshqueek

Having recently returned from Antwerp, Belgium, I find myself sitting in the backyard enjoying the late summer sun. In front of me, I see my laptop and an empty Word file, as I have (foolishly) agreed to write a report on the UnderEmpire.net Get Together (Sebrent: *cues the sound of a whip*... Less talking, more writing!). The only problem is that I find myself clueless regarding where to begin. How do you begin a story that has been in the making for a year? Do you start at the point that the idea of a gathering with members from the community was first mentioned, or many months later when we had a confirmed location and could really begin planning the whole event?

For the sake of keeping things simple, I decided to start from the beginning, back to June 2006. In the Off Topic section, a discussion took place on who everyone liked to play against from the UnderEmpire.net community. While at first the tactical masters of the past were mentioned as favoured opponents, it didn't take long before the suggestion was made to have an organized event where the members of the community could meet up with one another for a friendly game of Warhammer.

This suggestion got picked up fairly quick by others and before we knew it, a group of devoted people began looking for a suitable location for such an event to be held.

As it would eventually take nine months before there was a confirmed location for the event, we will make a little jump forward in time. It was halfway into March when Mallekha the Overwhelmer (a known face on the Herdstone and UnderEmpire.net communities) announced that after several weeks of phoning and 'bugging' people, he had managed to reserve the Outpost in Antwerp for the event. Of course, after such a long period, there was a sigh of relief. Unfortunately for others, this also brought forth the spooky thought, "oh, now we really need to get this organized," but, luckily, this is where the UnderEmpire.net forum was put to good use.

Back in June 2006, when the whole thing started, a separate section of the forum was reserved for this event which quite a few members frequented. Through them, there was a suitable base for feedback regarding ideas for the event, and, on occasion, a (quick) brainstorm session which led to some decent ideas that were put to good use. Approximately two weeks after the Outpost was confirmed as the location, one such brainstorm session resulted in a majority of the members being in favour of a team tournament. To add a little twist to the regular setup of tournaments, the idea was brought forward to have teammates switched after each round.



This idea was received with much enthusiasm as everyone wanted to play both with and against everyone else. After some discussion on how this could be done, I stepped forward with the idea of using the Swiss system and volunteered to write a tournament pack. However, in the end, I did not have to do this alone as, after a short discussion, Mallekha the Overwhelmer and Scarfester volunteered to help, and the three of us began to set up the organization for the event.

Once more, a few months passed by, and, in that time, some members had managed to verify that they were coming to the event; making our line-up: Bodacious (Daan), Deathmaster Mik (Michiel), Mallekha the Overwhelmer (Xavier), Scarfester (Tom), Skaven Lord Vinshqueek (Vincent), Thraksittar (Daniel), Underlord Burrow (Dan), and Warlock Rageaganish (Michel) of the UnderEmpire.net community; all meeting with one another in Antwerp... that is eight people from five countries and two continents!

I could continue blabbering on, but, of course, you're all far more interested in what actually happened in Antwerp. However, a word of warning: I only arrived in Antwerp on the 21st and left very early in the morning on the 23rd, so the report itself has been created from my own experience with a lot of helpful notes from Daan, Tom, and Xavier to fill in some gaps.

20th of July 2007

The day before the event would be starting; many of the participants were already travelling towards Antwerp. Ignoring the route planner on the internet that told him to swim approximately 4500 kilometre across the Atlantic Ocean, Michel (who was called 'Rage' all week due to his account name on the UnderEmpire.net community) had flown all the way from Montreal and arrived early in the morning. At the airport, he was welcomed by Xavier, who lives in Antwerp and therefore had fairly little travelling to do.

Travelling by train from Eindhoven, Netherlands, which isn't far from Antwerp, Daan arrived a couple of hours later that day at the Antwerp Central Station where both Xavier and Michel were awaiting him, and together they went towards the youth hostel, De Heksenketel, where the majority of the group would be sleeping for the next couple of days.

Representing the United Kingdom, Tom and Dan were driving all the way from Oxford, where the two of them met up. Leaving somewhere around five o' clock in the morning, they began their journey on the road towards Dover, where they would be taking the ferry towards France. Upon their arrival at the mainland of Europe, their travel towards Belgium was marked by a sheer amount of rain. While it began as a light rain, the intensity increased the closer they got to Antwerp.

The rain had begun to fill the road with water and visibility began to worsen. This, combined with the car windows steaming up, resulted in Tom and Dan ending up in a little suburb north of Antwerp. However, after a quick call to Xavier, they found themselves in Antwerp, but due to the strange way Belgium uses signs on the roads (which at times appear to contradict one another), this didn't go well and they were lost again. Finally, after another call to Xavier, he and his brother picked up the two Brits at a nearby landmark and brought them back to the hostel.

At the hostel however, they were met by a new challenge. Due to the high ceilings in the building itself, the stairs were fairly steep, which is somewhat troublesome when your bed is on the second floor and you have quite a few army cases with you. Quickly, the stairs were dubbed "the stairs of doom" as many people tripped or nearly tripped on their way up and down them. Still, despite "the stairs of doom", everyone was quickly settled in and Xavier soon took them all towards the Outpost, where the battling for the next three days would take place.



After the location was approved, the group went out to find something to eat. Of course, Belgium is known for its fries with mayonnaise and, after having met that part of the Belgian cuisine, they went off for another thing Belgium is quite known for: its beer. The group ended up in a small bar called the Kulminator where up to around five hundred (yes, you read it correctly: 500!) beers can be ordered from a menu, in the same way one would order food in a restaurant.

Eventually the group returned to the hostel, as Michel had been up at that moment for over thirty hours and was getting pretty tired. Upon their arrival at De Heksenketel, he went directly to bed, while the others remained at the bar of the hostel for a couple more drinks and a bit of a chat. Eventually, they too decided that a bit of a sleep might do them well and, after managing to survive “the stairs of doom” (which ought to be read with the ‘dun-dun-dunnn’ tune in the back of your mind, to properly get a feeling for its evil), they too went to bed.

21st of July 2007

Now originally I would be travelling to Antwerp together with Daan, but due to a miscommunication (for which trainee Eshinities ought to be blamed...) I had misunderstood the date he was leaving and, as such, would be arriving a day later than him. So, after an uneventful train trip south, I ended up in Antwerp Central Station where I was welcomed by Daan, Tom, Dan, and Michel. Together, we returned to the hostel, and, after I dropped my kit there, we went towards the Outpost where we were welcomed by Xavier's brother.

While many of us were occupied with the long and tedious process of unpacking our armies (unsurprising with a horde army like Skaven, isn't it?), Michiel arrived. He had brought along his foldable gaming table, which from what at first sight appears to be a bunch of wood strapped together is quite quickly transformed into a great looking table complete with grass permanently in it. Still, if that wasn't enough, he also brought along his 'Zundap' scenery... While I can't see the expression of our readers (yes, that is you right now), it might be the case that you're frowning right now and have no idea what 'Zundap' scenery is, so let me explain.

In 2004, Games Workshop had their online summer campaign called the Storm of Chaos. During this period, the UnderEmpire.net community had just started, but managed to make a name for themselves due to a HUGE presence in the campaign in terms of written pieces being recognised and published in the campaign newsletters. Now during this time, Michiel was one of the members of the Council of Thirteen, who were leading the Skaven of the UnderEmpire.net community (and any others willing to listen to them). Their first target in the campaign was the battle site called Zundap.

Zundap was in the background of the campaign as a small city with a large mill. Now, at this same time, the term 'SkavenAde' had been introduced on the UnderEmpire.net community (a parody on the beverage, Gatorade, for those who hadn't made the link yet) and it appeared an interesting possibility for many to... convert the mill towards a production facility to distribute SkavenAde to all Skaven armies from out of Zundap.



Many months after the campaign had finished, Michiel had begun building scenery pieces based on Zundap. So what arrived on the table were a huge mill and two more buildings that were equally impressive. While the photos give a fair indication of how they looked, I can assure all the readers of the Skavenblight Gazette web magazine that you simply need to see the scenery pieces in person to really be able to appreciate the time and effort spent on them. (Unsurprisingly, a couple of gasps and whistling noises could be heard after the pieces were put on the foldable gaming table). Soon after Michiel has set up his table, Daniel arrived with his father from out of Berlin and the full group had finally arrived at the UnderEmpire.net Get Together 2007.

Many of us were already done setting up our armies and while we were admiring one another's armies, the opportunity was taken to place all models together to see how a real horde looks. So, after everyone had walked up and down the basement a couple of times, all the units and models were placed on Michiel's table... The site of approximately 18000 points worth of Skaven all on that single table was a very impressive sight to behold.

After many pictures were taken from all sides of the table (in the end, you don't make pictures very easily of so many models), Daniel's father was so kind as to make a group photo of everyone standing behind the table, where everyone wondered whether they were to say 'Cheese' or 'Traitor' when the photos were taken. We were Skaven after all.

Once all pictures were taken, we began the tournament and determined who was facing who during the first round using papers with numbers on them placed in a cup. So, everyone took a paper and, with our paws guided by the Horned One, we ended up with these battles for the first round:

Deathmaster Mik vs. Thraskittar

Skaven Lord Vinshqueek vs. Warlock Rageaganish

Bodacious vs. Underlord Burrows

Mallekha the Overwhelmer vs. Scarfester

As everyone was facing someone from another country and it was all a bit new, the first few rounds took some time, and, occasionally, we walked from one table to the other (for example, to watch how Daniel let his doomwheel thunder forward in a line between two units). In the end, the battle between Michel and I was to be determined in the combat between our two 'heavy hitter units'.

I had brought along a big stormvermin unit (with shields, as in my opinion they're not worth it without them) of 28 models and full command, supported by my battle standard bearer and Ikit Claw, who acted as my general. This meant that I had a unit that was worth (including the bonus for unit standard bearer, battle standard bearer and general) approximately 1050 victory points... Opposite to that one, Michel had fielded a unit of 30 clanrats with a battle standard bearer, chieftain and grey seer in that single unit.

This meant that whoever won the combat, would most likely win the rest of the battle as well. Of course, I lost the combat and my unit was run down, meaning that Michel suddenly had a VERY comfortable lead.

By the time Michel and I managed to finish turn four, we had already been battling one another for some five hours. So, as everyone had already departed a while before to the sandwich shop, we decided to call it quits and follow them. However, as we arrived, we noticed that due to a national day of celebration, the shop was closed and the others were nowhere to be seen. Still, we were getting hungry and followed our noses, which lead us to a kebab shop... On the terrace, we had our döner kebab sandwich and had a nice chat on weird types of food and blood bowl. After we were done eating, we returned to the Outpost, where, on the way back, we were acting as goalies in some bachelorette evening.



Upon our arrival back at the Outpost, everyone apparently had already returned from their trip to (apparently) another sandwich store and were already preparing themselves for the second round of battling for that day. However, Michiel already mentioned that he wouldn't be able to play a full second battle and with Xavier leaving early as well, we went from eight players to six.

This meant that there were eventually only two players who had lost their battles, which meant the battles for the second round were as following:

Thraskittar vs. Scarfester

Bodacious vs. Skaven Lord
Vinsheek

Warlock Rageaganish vs. Underlord
Burrows

Moving my army one table down, I was joined by Michiel who would be watching the armies of Daan and I during this round. Before the battle even began, however, Daan warned me that the table we were playing on was somewhat 'cursed' and produced quite a few misfires in his previous battle. Taking his word for granted, we began to deploy our armies, and having the first turn, I had already forgotten his words, until the... 'accidents' started to happen.

In my first turn, I managed to let my doomwheel roll forward some fifteen inches and, rolling for the warp-lightning, managed to roll a misfire. Not a great result, as it meant one VERY big explosion, but on the other hand it would also dish out three S10 hits to the nearest, most heavily armoured character/ unit. Off course, that happened to be my unit of stormvermin... Still, I had more shooting to do and the next thing on my list was targeting Daan's warp-lightning cannon with mine. As you can expect, I rolled a misfire (again) and on the misfire chart rolled a 2, meaning my second war machine exploded with quite spectacular results. To add to the insult, just about every weapon team I had brought along managed to misfire.

So, after a poor round, Daan was up for his first round. During his shooting phase, he aimed his warp-lightning cannon and I had to roll for my "Look Out, Sir" roll. Picking up a dice with the infamous words Anything but a 1, I noticed that luck wasn't really on my side in this battle as the result of the roll was off course a 1... After being wounded, I still had a 5+ ward save (thank the Horned One for that), but that one too would not save Ikit Claw as I rolled a three. This meant that I had suddenly lost my only potent magic caster and approximately eight hundred points due to shooting.

Even while I had Michiel, a real Deathmaster, on my side of the table, the battle itself was pretty much decided from that point on, as I wasn't able to put a dent in Daan's army. Still, even while I had another defeat for that day coming closer with each turn, the pizza Michiel and I had ordered during an earlier break had arrived and we were quite enjoying ourselves over it. (Apparently, losing with a warm and full stomach doesn't feel so bad for some reason, ha-ha).

At the time we were finished with our battle and I had definitely had a second loss to my name, Michiel was packing his table and scenery as he would soon be travelling back towards the Netherlands again. As both Daan and I were done with our battle as one of the first in the group, we helped him out with the packing and wondered how he managed to put all his stuff in his car. Still, he managed to do so and after he said his goodbyes to everyone, the others had already begun packing their armies as they too had finished their battles.

When we returned to the hostel, it was already late in the evening and we sat down outside for a drink and a chat; a long chat that lasted until past three o' clock in the (very) early morning... One of the main subjects was the past 'Civil War' campaign. This was run in the aftermath of the Games Workshop summer campaign on the UnderEmpire.net community and eventually ran for over two years.



So, memories were brought back again and a long discussion began on what everyone liked or disliked about the campaign, which was of course followed by the question on what was going to change in the 'Civil War' campaign 2 that at that time was still in the process of being set up. Both Michel and I are two of three members of the community working on the campaign, meaning that we were dodging a couple of questions, as we didn't want to give away too much information on what everyone could expect.

22nd of July 2007

While I was astonished the evening before that we were sharing our room in the hostel with several Italian girls, this eventually happened to be somewhat of a downside for me, as I was sleeping above one that managed to keep me awake the better part of the night due to her snoring. So, no longer being able to catch a bit of rest, I decided to get up at what was about seven o' clock in the morning and was after a while joined by Michel as we both decided to go downstairs.

Here, we read the comments made on the UnderEmpire.net forum to our posts and came to the conclusion that the Azerty keyboard is something that would function better as decoration (which is quite a nice description, compared to the amount of swearing that was heard due to trying to type on that piece of equipment) than as a keyboard... seeing Daan type a sentence in normal English, due to the changed position of some keys, looked like an alien language but was something that managed to create a splendid mood that morning.

After our breakfast we once again took along the series of boxes, cases and whatnot to the Outpost for the second day of battling one another. Upon our arrival at the Outpost somewhere around half past eleven in the morning, we decided to do a mega battle. Using a scenario from the General's Compendium called 'A Traitor in Our Midst'; two teams would battle one another, knowing that one of their members is a traitor and could turn AWOL somewhere during the battle.

So, after pushing three gaming tables together, teams were created (Michel, Xavier, Dan and Daan versus Tom, Daniel and I) and the traitors were specified by picking dice from a cup. As all of us had brought armies of 2000 points, Tom used the extra 'reserve' he had brought along and our side was allowed to use an extra (small) Eshin army from Daan. This meant that two forces of 8000 points each were facing one another; which is an awful lot of Skaven models on a gaming table. The setup was as follows: Michel was facing the overwhelming size of Tom's army, while having the support of a portion of Xavier's force. The other half of Xavier's force and the army of Dan were facing the 'Eshin detachment' and the Skryre army I had brought along, while Daan was seated opposite to Daniel.

The first turn started off with the team consisting of Tom, Daniel, I moving our forces towards the other side of the gaming table. This was quickly followed by a magic phase, and, with the large amount of magic casters on the table, would be something that was going to create utter chaos from time to time. Unfortunately for Tom, his grey seer miscast and further along the field, two plagues were cast on irresistible force, though just too far out of range to claim any victims.



Second in line was the shooting, and, as Daniel had brought along a screaming bell for his grey seer, we waited with anticipation to see what it would actually do. As we had decided that its effect would influence the entire battlefield, the results could make a very big impact on the happenings each turn. However, due to a roll that included two 2's, it killed several rats of the unit pushing the bell and gave the rest of the group a good laugh... Unfortunately for Xavier, the laughter didn't last very long, as after his warp-lightning cannon had been targeted by mine, the Skryre war machine vanished in a green ball of flame. On the bright side for them, one member of a triad happened to be exactly under the shot and died along with it. Well, that's what one gets for standing in the way.

On the other side of the table, the force of Michel, Xavier, Dan and Daan began moving forward as well, which was followed by a somewhat disappointing magic and shooting phase. Dan's grey seer miscast (taking a strength two hit in the process), while Xavier's seer took a wound from a token that had gone bad.

Michel however managed to do a little better, as he managed to cast a vermintide that did reasonably well (considering how tight all units were standing next to one another, that isn't something that is surprising, looking back at it...) and eventually skitterleaped his chieftain between the warp-lightning cannons of Tom and myself. The shooting that followed saw one of Dan's ratling guns blow itself up and the remainder of the shooting from the others didn't cause the mayhem they were hoping for.

At the start of the second turn, things were getting a bit messy on the battlefield as combats were erupting all over the place. This meant that we forgot to write down most of the stuff that happened at that moment, which means that the part of the report on the mega battle with the second and third turn might appear to be a bit 'blurred'... (Off course, that's why pictures say so much more).

On the side of Tom, Daniel and I, the magic phase was one that left its mark. Daniel managed to cast a Plague spell with irresistible force for the second time during the battle, while I on the other hand managed to miscast with Ikit Claw and rolled 11 on the Miscast Table, which meant that he lost his 3D6 S5 warp-lightning spell. Of course, this action was followed by a deep sigh of relief from Xavier and Dan, as they could now worry a bit less about the magic capabilities of Ikit.

Further down the table, however, the Daniel's grey seer kept on casting one spell after the other with great effect. As he readied himself to skitterleap the seer off the bell, no less then ten dispel dice were brought together, but once again Daniel managed to roll irresistible force and got away with it... and not a moment too soon as once again a double was rolled for the screaming bell, making the unit stubborn for that turn.

It was at the start of the second turn that Dan decided to announce his status as that of a traitor, as Ikit Claw and its Skryre entourage were looming a bit too close for his liking. However, he could officially mention this at the end of his second turn instead of the beginning, which meant that he could only turn his units and hope that he wouldn't be shot to bits in the meanwhile, but also that I wasn't the traitor on the other side.



In the magic phase with a couple miscasts and irresistible forces again, Dan skitterleapt his grey seer next to that of Daan and promptly barfed over him with pestilent breath causing a wound (the first of many to come). To add to the insult, Daniel skitterleapt an assassin into combat with the seer and killed him outright. Now Daan had quite a few regeneration rolls to make due to the twisted crown, but managed to pass all of them. A true life-saver!

During the shooting phase, luck was on the side of Dan, as he managed to blow up the warp-lightning cannon of Daan. Next to that, his plague monks were thundering into the direction of Xavier, his army and the ratlings aimed at the devotees of clan Pestilens jammed, while the other blew itself up.

On the other side of the battlefield, Tom got into combat with Michel's 'main unit' which consisted of thirty clanrats, a battle standard bearer and grey seer. After quite a few dice rolls, Tom managed to win the combat by three points and managed to catch the fleeing unit. As such, he managed to capture a banner, take down the battle standard bearer and kill the general of the army, which meant he suddenly had a lot of victory points claimed. Michel had fought bravely, but the dice gods decided otherwise.

Eventually, it appeared that Daniel wasn't the only one who could roll many irresistible forces during his magic phase, as Xavier managed to cast Death Frenzy on his two rat ogre packs, but also an irresistible plague on the Eshin night runners that were moving closer each turn to his army. Of course, after a spell like that there weren't many of them left.

At this time, the effect known as 'Time Warp' began to kick in. This is a natural phenomena often seen during events called mega battles (yes, I'm being sarcastic here) due to one side of the table getting ahead of the other side of the table. In this case, both Tom and Michel were moving faster than anyone else with their phases, while Daniel and Daan were still working out the effects of spells... Oh, and off course the continuous saves Daan managed to pass with the regeneration roll for his grey seer.

During the end of the third turn, I declared my status as a traitor, so the start of the fourth turn was one that forced Dan to reconsider the position of his troops. At that point, he was surrounded by three enemy armies, which simply had his force locked down to his own deployment zone... Pinned down by Xavier's plague censer bearers, my doomwheel and stormvermin with the remainder of Daan's army on his flank ; things were looking very grim for Dan towards the end of this battle.

Daniel's magic phase continued its reign of destruction, as he managed to release a plague spell on no less than five units. Something that was quite astonishing, even while three of them were his units... to add to his already destructive magic phase for that turn, he managed to cast a vermintide that managed to affect six units (with a couple of them being his own, again) and one of the targets was Daan's grey seer, who of course survived the onslaught.

Speaking of his grey seer however, one character that deserves a place and special mention in this report ought to be this Grey Seer Kreukel, who was a creature that showed resilience unknown for a Skaven.

To indicate what it had gone through:

- It had over ten spells directed at him, all of which he managed to dispel;
- It managed to kill an assassin in close combat;
- It regenerated from two pestilent breath spells, two warp-lightning spells and countless storm daemons;
- From the start of the battle up to its final demise, it managed to tie down no less than two assassins, a warlock engineer, two other grey seers (that of Dan and Daniel) and two Eshin sorcers.



However, the Grey Seer was felled by the assassin, Scratchblade, in the end, though his body was never found after the battle and rumour tells that one might see the mage popping up somewhere in Skavenblight in the near future.

On the other side of the battlefield, Tom still had a huge amount of troops left and began wheeling everything towards the other half of the battlefield in order to get a flank attack on Xavier and myself, after having almost completely annihilated Michel his army. However, a successful Plague from Xavier's grey seer managed to kill sixteen clanrats out of a thirty strong unit with its grey seer in it. It was the tip of the ice berg however, as they were followed by two units of plague monks, but unfortunately they wouldn't see combat before the battle was over.

Further down the field, Dan tried to cast a warp-lightning on one of my units, and, after grabbing a series of power dice, managed to end up with an impressive score of 20. However, grabbing all my dispel dice in a display of sheer magic dominance, I ended up with a score of 32 on the dispel roll, which meant that the warp-lightning spell wasn't going to happen that turn. Unfortunately, he was a tricky opponent and had a bound spell still inactivated, that I had failed to notice and one warp scroll later, several models of that unit had died anyhow.

Somewhat further into the future (once again due to the effects of the time warp), both Tom and Michel managed to make two Insane Courage rolls with their slave units during their fifth turn, while on the other side of the table both Daniel and Daan were still working out the effects of the Plague spell from their third turn. Not much was left however, as all that remained from Daan's army were twenty-eight newly painted clanrats and a group of ten plague monks with a priest leading them.

In the end, we decided to call it quits and end the battle. As both Rage and Daan saw almost their entire army being destroyed and the other side having approximately half their armies intact, the result was determined to be that of a draw... There had been an awful lot of mayhem, but the enjoyment everyone had was something that would last for quite a while.

Late in the afternoon we brought our armies and scenery back to the hostel, after which we took the subway and began our journey towards the home of Xavier. His mother had been so kind to invite all of us over for a dinner spaghetti, and, after what was a splendid meal, we enjoyed the pleasant weather outside (some with the aid of a Belgian beer...). During the evening we were cordially invited to gasp at some of Xavier's Nurgle models and view the hobby projects both he and his brother were working on. After a couple hours (and a jam session by Tom and Xavier), we decided to go back to the hostel.

Xavier's mother was so kind as to drive a group of us back to the hostel, but unfortunately we were with six people who would be sleeping there, while only five (and even then it was quite tight) could be taken along in the car. So, Daan was eventually brave enough to endure a ride on the back of Xavier's Vespa (an old model scooter), but he managed to survive the journey back to the hostel (Bodacious: I needed to make a couple of regeneration saves, but I'm okay...) and once we had all arrived there, we had a pleasant conversation on all matter of subjects, which went on to the late hours of the evening.

23rd of July 2007

As I was leaving this morning, I had made sure all my stuff had already been packed the evening before. So, after I had woken up, I brushed my teeth and cleaned up my bed, followed by a silent tread towards the door of the room. However, I wasn't getting away that easy as one apparently doesn't walk past Michel without awaking him. So, shaking hands and saying my good bye, I did the same to Tom (who slept above Michel) as we had apparently awoken him by the noise we made. Of course, walking over a wooden floor towards the stairway, I made one hell of a noise, which most likely woke up a couple of people in the hostel.



Thanking the owner of the hostel for the pleasant stay, I left for Antwerp Central Station and after being pointed into the right direction by a more than sweet woman, began my trip back towards the Netherlands. So, while I was on my way back home, the others awoke and after their breakfast packed their armies for the final round of battles in the Outpost... During this final round, Tom would battle Dan to decide the first and second position. On the table next to them, Daan had to face Michel to determine who'd claim the third position and on the final table, Xavier faced Daniel. Unfortunately, it appears there are no records regarding those battles.

A couple of weeks before the event was to begin, Xavier had managed to get his hands on some (very) old edition plastic clanrat models, which he had painted up to serve as trophies for the event itself. The gold model for the first position went to Tom, followed by the silver model that went to Dan as he had claimed the second position. Both Daan and Michel ended up on the third position, but as Michel was given the misfire award due to the sheer amount of miscasts he had managed to suffer with his grey seer, the bronze model for third position was given to Daan. The award for 'Best Painted' went to Michiel due to his stunning 'Zundap' scenery, Daniel gained the award for 'Most Slaves Killed' (even if most of those were his own), the award for 'Most Fun Army' was given to Dan and the 'Army Award' (due to having used a clan Skryre army that was apparently balanced and fun to play against) went to Vincent (me).

After the final rounds had been played and the awards handed out to those present, the whole group remained in the Outpost to upload some of the best pictures made, just to show everyone who wasn't able to make it what they missed out on. (Editor: This means that we expect many of those members next year...). Once that was a done, a short visit was taken to the local Games Workshop hobby store in Antwerp and all the armies were brought back to the hostel, after which dinner followed.

The next person to leave was Daniel, who had to take the train back to his father in Berlin. Once they waved him goodbye, the remainder of the group (Xavier, Tom, Dan, Michel and Daan) visited the nearest Irish pub, where the British made an attempt on trying to show the others how one ought to drink properly. Eventually this party was taken back towards the hostel (where Michel apparently was ambushed by someone with a water pistol, showing that one can pass by him without him knowing so *grins*...), where Xavier eventually departed and he was thanked for the umpteenth time for having organized the whole event. As with every night up to that point, this too became a late one.

24th of July 2007

After three rounds of battles and one very big mega battle, the time had come to say goodbye to one another as everyone went their own way again. Michel departed early to continue his tour through Belgium, which left Tom, Dan and Daan as the remaining trio.

They were taking one last stroll through Antwerp to get some gifts for the family and friends back home... After Tom and Dan had walked Daan towards the Antwerp Central Station, they were the last people to depart from Belgium and would begin their long trip back towards the UK, right after having dealt with a somewhat shocking parking fee. (What would one expect after more than four days of continuously keeping a parking spot occupied)

So, for a full four days (and a bit more), members of the community from (literally) all over the globe had gathered and get to know the faces and personalities behind the avatars you see when logging in on the forums. It is an experience that is quite unique, as it doesn't happen very often that people from various countries with a single passion (Skaven) meet up for several days. It is hopefully the first of many to come and at the time I'm writing this last part of the article, plans are already in the making for an UnderEmpire.net Get Together 2008 with the aim of holding the event in Nottingham in the United Kingdom. So, in case you read an article about a year from now on an infestation of rats at the Games Workshop headquarters, I can assure you that we will cover our tracks well... Until that day, we can only wait and finish this article with the words that ring true in regard to another happening like this: Let's make it happen!



Skrilkt Doomseeker the Ever-Cursed

By Bodacious

Legends of the UnderEmpire



Skrilkt started his life in the harsh breeding pens of Clan Eshin sometime during the events of the Black Plague that begun in 1111IC ended in 1118IC. Working his way through the ranks of the night runners and gutter runners successively, Skrilkt showed to be a talented assassin with an unsurpassed skill at duel-weapon combat.

After his advancement to the lofty rank of assassin, Skrilkt became most famous for his perfection of the style of the Iron Claw, and his list of successful assassinations contains the names of several Elector Counts as well as prominent Skaven warlords at that time. It is even rumoured that the assassin that eventually killed Emperor Mandred Skavenslayer was, in fact, Skrilkt, but that operation was done in such extreme secrecy that it would be impossible to know for sure. The fact that Skrilkt's teachings on the usage of fighting claws is still used in the training dojo's of clan Eshin is an accomplishment that speaks for itself.

Some time into Skrilkt's career, a plot was forged by the Council to assassinate the Arch-Plaguelord Nurglitch of Clan Pestilence. The position of the pestilent patriarch had been considerably weakened by the failure of the Black Plague and the council sought to set an example. The Nightlord himself had at that time recommended the use of Skrilkt as the finest assassin Clan Eshin had to offer. Versions of the story tell that this was supposedly part of the Nightlords plot to get rid of Skrilkt, because he was afraid that the new Master Assassin would soon become powerful enough to overthrow him. These motives are still heavily disputed though, seeing as the rivalry between Eshin and Pestilence is great indeed and that the Nightlord would have rather had a successful assassination at that time.



Stories vary, but all contain certain similar facts. Skrilkt did eventually face Nurglitch in combat, and it was a bitter and closely fought battle. Some tales tell of Nurglitch defeating Skrilkt and cursing him, while other have the Horned Rat cursing Skrilkt after killing one of his most favoured servants. Some stories even have Skrilkt being pushed or submerged into the Cauldron of a Thousand Poxes.

Nurglitch either survived the assassination or a new Plaguelord took his title, for Skrilkt was captured alive by the Plague Monks shortly afterward. Long hours of torture and study revealed that Skrilkt had become highly regenerative and was in constant, suffering pain as a thousand illnesses ravaged him simultaneously. Such were the poisons that while some boiled his blood, others cooled it. While his internal organs were eaten away, cancerous growths grew anew to replace them. Thus Skrilkt continuously felt the pain of the diseases, but would never truly be slain by them.

Realising the intent of their malignant deity, the Plague Monks decided to let Skrilkt roam free, bonded by the weapons of his foe, to suffer endlessly on the battlefields as a string-puppet for the Horned Rat. The Plague Monks grafted two burning Plague Censers to his hands so that he would cause the death, that which Skrilkt so frantically sought himself, to everything around him.

Legends tell that Skrilkt Doomseeker the Ever-Cursed mysteriously appears where the Horned Rat wills him. His raving madness causing him to search out the enemy's best warriors and most dangerous monsters. Skrilkt throws himself into combat with reckless abandon, flailing his dual Plague Censers to envelop his adversaries in a fetid cloud of green smoke, and smashing the skulls of those that survive it.

What follows are some guideline rules for including Skrilkt in your games of Warhammer. It shouldn't be too hard to adapt these rules to other settings that Skrilkt would be likely to appear in, such as Mordheim or Warhammer Quest. These rules are not official and have only been briefly play tested. I would like to thank Khilkhret Foe-slayer for sending me the initial draft.

Skrilkt Doomseeker

350 points

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	LD
6	7	3	4	5	3	7	4	7

Equipment: 2 Plague Censers

Skrilkt counts as a single hero choice and you can only ever have one Skrilkt Doomseeker model in your army.

Special Rules:

Regeneration

A Thousand Diseases

Skrilkt's body is ravaged by a thousand diseases and it is told that they are the reason for his unnaturally long life, as well as his insane lust for combat.

During the compulsory movement phase, roll a D6. On the result of 1 or 2, Skrilkt suffers from Stupidity, on 3 or 4 he suffers from Frenzy and on 5 or 6 Skrilkt also suffers from Frenzy and causes Fear. All effects gained by A Thousand Diseases are removed during your next compulsory movement phase.

Dualwield

Having spent centuries wielding both of his Plague Censers, Skrilkt can use one of the massive weapons in each hand, crushing even the greatest foe with a flurry of hits from his spiked iron spheres.

Skrilkt wields two Plague censers simultaneously, and gets +1 A for having two weapons. The strength bonus is not cumulative, but the toughness test is (everyone in base contact, including Skrilkt, takes it twice!). In addition, Skrilkt gets +1 S on the first turn while charging into combat.

Warpfume Cloud

Due to the constant whirling of the censers, a thick cloud of warpfume surrounds Skrilkt. Enemies can have a hard time moving and shooting through this thick fog.

All shooting directed at Skrilkt suffers a -1 penalty. In addition, Skrilkt can not join any unit other than plague censer bearers, since other skaven shun the dangerous mutating fumes.

Musings about Clan Eshin

Part 2

By Moritz Hampel (Mutter)

Moritz Hampel continues his analysis of the Clan Eshin list, this issue looking at how the Sensei works within the force.

Hunting Strategies

So you've designed your army list, and are ready to do battle. Now, how do you actually get the Sensei into contact with an enemy?

Hidden Sensei, Leaping Assassin

Right when the Eshin list came out, I thought the perfect way to make use of its strategies would be to keep the Sensei hidden the first turn (to avoid taking damage from the Fellblade), kill off a magic user or two with the assassin, and come out when you're reasonably sure to get his skitterleap through.

Now, one of the designers with GW stated that he thought the Sensei would take damage nevertheless. I personally think it's a bit silly (since he is effectively out of the game, can't use his leadership either, now, can we?), and since it was never officially published in an FAQ, you're free to play it like that he does NOT take the damage.

For me, I'd probably abide by that unofficial version, even though I don't like it, since I believe in following the game designers' intents more than their rules. I think as far as RAW is concerned, he wouldn't take damage. Do with that what you will.

Hidden or not?

Most of the times you will want to leap your Sensei into that juicy target, choosing exactly where you'll strike (for that immanent and most positive overrun). Sometimes it can be a nice surprise if you keep him hidden and only spring him out once the enemy has actually come for you.

This tactic is most often employed when your opponent has a lot of magical defense, and you pretty much know where your intended target (unit with character, steamtank, stegadon, etc.) is going to attack. Beware though, this tactic suffers from certain fallacies (failed terror check, etc.), which far from guarantee your ninja rat can attack.

A host for the Sensei

If your Sensei is hidden, it's worth discussing which units he should hide in. Since leadership might be an issue, skirmishers aren't exactly a top contender. Basically, the best option would be to put him in a (fairly big, to avoid panic tests) unit of clanrats also harbouring a sorcerer to up their leadership significantly.

Planning overruns/pursuit

A lot of the time you will either destroy your opponent's unit completely (black coach, chariots, steam tank) or win the combat and pursue. Since you can position the Sensei freely when using skitterleap, make sure you choose the most advantageous position for that. Also bear in mind that sometimes you will be able to destroy/beat two units a turn, so plan your Tremendous Path Of Utter Destruction• carefully.

Some people think that the rules for skitterleap do NOT overrule the zonerule, meaning you'd still have to attack your target in the zone you were originally in before you leapt. Personally, I think this is stretching it way far, and the rules for the spell are quite clear on that. You should just know that there are a few people who might think otherwise.

Planning flight

Pretty similar to the previous points, the same principle applies to fleeing: When hitting characters in units, you will most of the time kill said character.

Most of the time, you will also lose the combat, and flee. While smoke bombs every so often give you the edge and make sure you get away, you can't plan on that for certain.

Especially if you're hitting mounted characters in cavalry units, quite often you will have to plan your flight route carefully, or else lose your Sensei during the opponent's turn due to another flight move. The best insurance against this is to pose a viable threat for said cavalry once they move towards your Sensei again: a clanrat unit in the flank, for example.

That way, your opponent has to carefully measure whether his thirst for revenge will outweigh the risk of losing another valuable unit to your Sensei (and, in this case, his buddies lingering close by).

Fighting Strategies

You managed to get into combat with your intended target - how do you go about to make the most of that foul-smelling, poison-dripping blade and the chattering maniac

wielding it? Basically, how do you make sure you kill your target?

Challenges

The Sensei LOVES challenges with his big, nasty blade! Overkill is your friend – lord level characters can be worth up to 8-9 points of CR in a challenge! Best thing that can happen to you ... Of course, usually the other player is aware of that, too, and will therefore try and avoid any challenge. Key to getting the most out of duels is knowing when and where to challenge.

Basically it's pretty simple: if the character is the only character and can't avoid the challenge (either because he's on his own or because he can't avoid the challenge because there's only one rank, for example), challenge. With overkill, you might even win the combat!

If there's another character nearby which you wouldn't target (unit champion next to wizard, for example), challenge away as well. Your opponent will decline, you can send the second character to the back ranks and hack away at your intended target without a proper duel.

The only time you shouldn't ever challenge is if your target is the only character in combat and HAS back ranks to hide in – if you then challenge, it will be declined, you

have to send your target into the back, and are forced to hack for no gain at basic troopers.

Remember that Brets who decline a challenge lose their ward save for the whole unit, and also remember that Blood Dragon Vampires always have to issue a challenge.

Big breaker units with two BD vamps in them can sometimes be crumbled away easily just by issuing continuous challenges, massive overkill and hence crumbling of the unit.

Big Gribbilies

Sometimes, you will come up against a character on a big beastly like a dragon, a griffin or even a non-flying one like a carnosaur. The decision whether to engage these characters with your Sensei is tough one – you can reliably only kill EITHER beast or rider in your initial strike, and whichever part is left has a good chance to kill you in return.

On the other hand, if you don't do anything against the beast, quite often it will rampage through your lines, and skaven can have some difficulties with trying to limit the damage such a monster can cause in their lines.

Now, when you do to decide to engage the monster, the question comes up whether you aim your deadly strike at the monster or its rider. The answer isn't an easy one either,





I'm afraid. It depends on the amount of attacks of the lord, and of course of the beast itself. Dragons will pretty much chew through the Sensei in one go, so it would make sense to take it out first. Smaller monsters with only four attacks won't be quite so successful – so again, it depends on the character.

In general, I'd always go for the monster if I saw a good chance of killing it in one go (see 'Six wounds' on that). Even if the character is equally deadly, he is a lot less scary and mobile without a monster. Best bet would be to move units into the vicinity to take care of the character now on foot as soon as he kills off the Sensei.

The good thing about characters on monsters is that usually they'll have to accept challenges. So if the Sensei survives, he'll usually win the combat by loads. Another good tactic is to bring friends along – read below.

Big Gribbles & the Swarm

Since the Sensei and his foe/s are usually locked in a challenge, and the Sensei might quite possibly generate huge amount of CR even while dying himself, it makes sense to bring somebody else along to profit from said big amounts of CR once he's dead.

That way, even if the counter-strike from the character sees the Sensei dead, the opponent's character will usually still loose combat by four or five – enough to see him off in most cases.

The best troops for this kind of tactic are rat-swarms, since with their high mobility and full LOS, they are the easiest to bring in contact with the monster. Plus, they are unbreakable, so don't have to pass a terror test to charge in. In a pinch, any unit that passes its test will do, though – be that slaves, clanrats or giant rats.

Regeneration

Well, originally this part of the document contained a huge DON'T TOUCH THIS!! sign – with the possibility of a single 4+ roll to negate all wounds caused by the Fellblade, the risk to go near a character with regeneration was just too high.

Now that they've changed regeneration, it's just like any old ward save (even though it can be combined with a ward), so it's slightly annoying, but nothing to be deathly afraid off.

Six wounds

The average amount of wounds caused by 2D6 (which is from two wounds from the Fellblade) is seven – slightly more than the usual monster with W6 has. Laws of average tells us that there'll be a number of times when you roll LESS than six with two dice – and chances are, if you do, you die (well, not you, but your Sensei – which, in a sense, IS you). So how do we make sure this doesn't happen? We chip one or two wounds off the big gribbly, and rely on the fact that it is far easier to roll a four or five with two dice than it is to roll a six. Rattlers, jezzails, warpstone stars or even lowly throwing stars are fit for this.

Strikes First

There are a number of characters in the Warhammer world that strike before anybody else – Slaneesh demons, anointed Dark elves, some dwarf or chaos lords will all strike before your Sensei.

Usually, all these characters have enough attacks to cause between two and three wounds, and if they do, chances are your Sensei is dead (or will at least die very soon from the side effects of his cutlery).

So best stay away from those types until you've made sure they don't sport the 'strike first' items/runes/bloodline powers.

The “hierarchy of kills”

When the opponent starts to align his army, the first thing you should do is assign a “hierarchy” of kills for your Sensei. Identify threats to your army (often things like terror-causers), and decide whether you can get rid of them without too much trouble with the Sensei (and of course his trusted blade). If not, leave them until you’ve killed the things that carry big pay-loads and are actually easy to kill. Then take care of everything threatening your army.

Since the Sensei might possibly be dead by turn three without any enemy contact, time is somewhat of the essence. To make the most of the Fellblade, you should target opponents in this order:

- Big pay-loads that are easy to kill and threaten your army (steam tank, black coach, stegadon)
- Big pay-loads that are easy to kill (Slann, DOW paymaster, lord-level casters)
- Things that threaten your army (flying monsters, terror causers, etc.)
- Expensive, dangerous characters

Note that this hierarchy does not apply to your assassin; he should just kill wizards until there are none left, and then he can go for targets like warmachine crews. If he is armed with the warpstone stars, he will go for multi-wound creatures/things like chariots, ogre-class creatures and the like.

If you mess up the hierarchy, you might leave threats to your army or points-sinks untouched by the time your Sensei dies. Obviously, in some games your Sensei will depart before he has finished all the bloody work you have arranged for him – so make the kills that he does manage to accomplish count!

To the rescue!

Usually, Skitterleap is used to transport your assassins into combat. Sometimes, the nifty little spell might also save your characters scrawny little butt! It will happen that either your Sensei or assassin will break from combat, and whether they are being pursued or not, every so often this flight will leave them in a precarious position, either because they will be charged next turn by something, or because they mightn’t rally and run off the board.

So use your Skitterleap to save Mighty Mouse. One way would be to move the Eshin sorcerer near enough (this is quite easy with their move of 6) or if this not enough, you could try to Skitterleap a sorcerer with a second one near your assassin.

The first sorcerer can now skitterleap the endangered killer to safety, or at least back onto the middle of the board to have another chance to rally. Obviously, this will work only if you have gained magical superiority by killing off enemy magic users prior, since you need to get both ‘leap attempts through.



Making an army your own: Standing out from the Crowd

by Mebob

One thing I really enjoy about this hobby is seeing a wonderfully created and original army, where the miniatures stand out due to their unique paint schemes and the where conversions scream out with the joy of the hobby, and I think to myself "Why isn't my army like that?" Now I'm sure that all of us dream of having that perfect army-original, professionally painted, that stands out from the crowd and just makes everyone's jaw drop in awe.

Now although it may be a daunting idea of creating your own unique army, it is a relatively easy one that can be done in a number of simple ways, which will make your horde stand out from the rest.

Be Different From the Crowd

One of the easiest ways of making an army different from others, is the colors you choose to paint it, far too many people choose the traditional color schemes chosen by Gamesworkshop which we have all seen too many times to count, so armies painted to this scheme just blend into the crowd. Whereas an army painted to the same standard, but painted using for example a cold ice blue color scheme, as opposed to Gamesworkshop's chosen scheme, will be seen more and greater appreciated as it is "different" and shows that the painter has thought about his/her army and has original thinking. This requires no extra effort, and really makes a big difference upon the individuality of your army.

Now that you have taken a step out of the mould and chosen your own personalized color scheme, even if you do not have the jaw-dropping skill of painting perfect models, you can still use painting to separate your army from everyone else's, by adding certain details to every model, binding your army together, for example tribal markings and war paint painted onto the skin of Orcs or Ogres.

In the picture to the right, you can see how the use of painting the fangs of the shield icons red and following this onto the banner has really added character and unified the unit, this has made it stand out from any other unit of Clanrats around. Something like this carried consistently throughout your army, will really bind the units together and improve the look of your army as a whole.

Straight Out of the Packet?

Now, when collecting an army many of us simply buy the models, put them together and paint them, making the models used identical to that of a thousand other armies, sometimes the same exact same model will be repeated two or three times in the same unit! The look of having "clones" of your models isn't a really good one, and using the exact same models in the same as everyone else playing that army certainly does not make your army seem original.



Treat Every model as an Individual

Now many of us like to convert awe inspiring generals to lead our army, but forget about the lowly Clanrats that make up the bulk of your force, now it doesn't have to be as hard as making each model contain a wonderful conversion, but as simple as swapping components, creating alternative poses, fixing up a model with green stuff, but carrying it out throughout a whole unit.

Use your bitz box, for many of us, throughout the years of our hobbying many of us will have hoarded a vast amount of spare equipment, limbs and accessories from throughout the miniatures range just lying in your room or a box collecting dust. Use them. Use the extra accessories and equipment on your models, give

each model something to make it different from anyone else's, like give a Clanrat a Bretonnian shield, a sheathed human sword on its back, a wood elf bow, anything to make it different from what is expected. Although minor conversion such as these may not seem much to a model on its own, rank it up in a unit full of them, and they really do "stand out from the crowd"

For example, look at the image on the left, the Clanrats there have been made with an assortment of bits from other ranges, the consistent use of shields and weapons from different races have made it more unique than a straight out of packet Clanrat unit, and the conversions done were even simple and easy to follow out. user posted image

Skaven are scavengers, treat them like that.



• *The Hellrats, designed and created by the Underempire's Setodimor*

Champions, Musicians and Standards

Now, when looking at you're fully ranked up and set up units, most people will end up spending most of their time looking at your unit concentrated on three models: The Musician, Standard bearer and champion, now you could just put together these models with whatever pieces come in the box and call it a day, but this just doesn't do the possibilities justice.

When creating your command group you should spend extra time and thought into their production, instead of using the banner that comes with the box, why not use that nifty empire one lying around in your room collecting dust? Treat your champions as the mini characters that they are, make them stand out, give them fearsome poses, shoulder pads, different weapons whatever makes them seem less of a Clanrat and more of a Clawleader, now what

I am saying here is pretty much regurgitation from what was said in the last paragraph, use your bitz box and anything that will make your models look different from everyone else's, whatever makes them "Stand out from the crowd".

As people will tend to look at your command group more than the rest of your unit it is important that you spend a little extra time painting these models, especially when it comes to the Standard, creating a beautiful design on a highlighted banner will really make the unit as a whole and shine that bit more (not literally, unless you've used gloss varnish of course ^^) and will draw attention away from any mistakes you may of made in your unit.

Themes

Now, just before you dive headfirst into creating an army, there are a few things you should think about beforehand, for example "will my army include any themes?", now choosing a theme for your army can be as simple as choosing a single Clan to align it to, or even making up your own warlord clan, with its own background.

There are many advantages to having a themed army, for example, it adds to the armies narrative, they can be fun to create, your army will be unified more, and most of all, your army will stand out from everyone else, choosing a theme will also open up a lot of conversion opportunities your previously wouldn't of thought of, allowing you to further differ your army from anybody else's.

A themeing you army goes well with the other things spoken about in this article, it will allow you to individualize your army that bit more carry out conversions throughout your army, you may find it easier to convert every model in a Skaven army themed around a specific thing, for example a Skaven horde based under Bretonia, may include looted Bretonian armour, and Bretonian slaves, a theme make your army more memorable, who's going to remember that straight out of the packet skaven army, painting to the standard colour scheme that looks no different to anyone else's?

But what people will remember, is that original army of skaven pirates which just looks different and unique.

Rounding off...

Hopefully this article will have inspired you to stop the repetitive process of buying a box of Clanrats and only using what you're "meant" to use, and convinced you to use what ever extra component lies in your bitz box.

By using some or all of the techniques described in this article you will be able to create an army that is really something else.

As some of you may know, the "Hellrats" is an army themed around daemon worshipping Skaven, and due to the heavy theme and beautiful conversions carried out throughout each model, it really does stick in your memory once you've seen it.

Note: instead of using the typical Clanrat models, Setodimor created his Clanrats from Plastic Plague Monks.

Setodimor: "Designing an army means much more then fitting as many of the strongest units into the points allowed. Many players enjoy creating detailed background stories for their armies, justifying their choices from a historical perspective. I, however, do not. For me, the most important part of army design is the visual theme that ties all the elements of the army together.

The hard part about creating a strong theme is that you have to design it almost completely before starting on any actual models. In the hellrats case, I first started painting a few plastic plaguemonks in Man United colours (missy adores Beckham and seem to ignore he's been in spain the last years). I noticed the models-in-progress was locking like rambling madmen at some point, and hence the daemon worshipping ratmen theme was born. From there, it was all about fitting the units I wanted into the theme. I'm really happy about most of the conversions, but not every troop type turned out perfect (the slaves being the most debated ones). The display tray is a crucial part of the visual impression, and makes the models look so much better.

The most rewarding part of creating a strongly (visually) themed army is the comments given by other players at forums or tournaments. When someone walks up to you and compliments your army, you'll surely grow an inch or two taller and all the hard work involved in creating the army is suddenly history.

A word of warning, once you have created a theme and started receiving those comments, you'll never be able to create a vanilla army again!"



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