

IRRESISTIBLE *force*

Issue 4 - February 2004

Bi-Monthly Warhammer E-zine



Inside: ■ Warhammer Tactica ■ Dark Elves ■ RIP – Mike Allen Column
■ Beastmen ■ NZ GT ■ Warhammer Rankings

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Editor: Andrew Galea

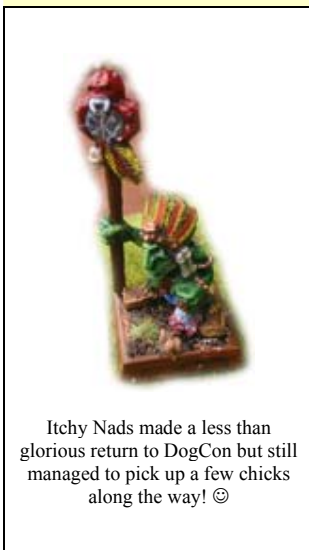
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Itchy Nads made a less than
glorious return to DogCon but still
managed to pick up a few chicks
along the way! ☺

Editorial



*Does this look like a man
under pressure? ☺*

Well Issue #4 if Irresistible Force has finally hit cyberspace! For a while it looked as if it was never going to see the light of day. What began as a simple idea has blossomed into a full e-zine and not even I could have foreseen the number of people downloading and reading IF. Don't get me wrong I am not complaining but my hosting provider hit me with some serious bills for exceeding monthly bandwidth. (Ouch!). Anyway I have since moved to a new provider and with a lot of extra features I am looking forward to developing the IF site into a treasure trove of info for Warhammer Fantasy players everywhere.

Which leads me to my next point, and that is the continued success of the IF. I am happy to report a steady stream of contributors to the e-zine and this issue is packed full of their dedication and hard work. We feature our first European (Denmark) writer in Brian Larsen and there are more articles from the UK in the wings for future issues. I encourage all of you to take some inspiration and send in a piece for consideration.

My original idea for Irresistible Force was to have a decent Warhammer Fantasy publication that we could all enjoy and so far I am pleased with what we have achieved. I have always intended (and still intend) to make the e-zine free to everyone and anyone. However I am taking the unprecedented step of providing an opportunity for my fellow gamers out there to donate funds to cover my costs and keep the e-zine humming along. All the information for donating money to Irresistible Force is on the web site (<http://www.irresistibleforce.net>). If you enjoy the e-zine and want it to continue and grow then a small donation to the cause will be greatly appreciated. Excess funds will go towards prizes for "best article of the month" and a "donator lucky dip" prize. On the other hand, if there are any fantasy figure companies out there wanting to advertise their products then once again I am open to suggestions for running advertisements in Irresistible Force.

So enough of that, and on with the show. This month's feature articles include another tactics article from an esteemed general (Charles Black), a fantastic tournament report from New Zealand GT winner Matt Lubbock and a detailed analysis of the Beasts of Chaos book by Brian Larsen. I tip in with the second part of my Dark Elves adventure and resident graphic artist Javier Centenera continues his comical view of Asharr the Chaos Dwarf sorcerer. I am sorry about the delay in getting this issue to you all, number 5 will be out hopefully within 2-3 months and will include our second battle report (it promises to be a ripper).

On my gaming front, I just competed in DogCon 2004 with my greenskins. Got a respectable top 20 finish out of 80 competitors and had a great weekend's gaming. Next is the launch of my Beastmen!

Take care and Happy Gaming,
Andrew Galea

Warhammer Tactica

By
Charles Black

Winning in not everything, but losing every time is not fun ...

Winning Warhammer battles is only a small, small part of overall gaming enjoyment. Painting, modelling, socialising, trash talking (especially Poms and Kiwis) are other enjoyable parts. However, losing on a regular basis can dampen your enthusiasm for the game.

This article has been written for gaming enthusiasts who would like to win a game every now and then. While the 'tips and tricks' in this article don't guarantee victory, they may provide you with some ideas on how to pose a few more challenges for your opponent.

PART A: THE 4 STAGES OF GAMING

99% of gamers will lose a lot at the start of their gaming careers. Don't get discouraged – rather you should use the time to learn about the game, your style of play and the different armies in the Warhammer world.

Like almost everyone else, mastering the gaming side of Warhammer is a learning process. Try to think of it in terms of the following 4 'stages':

Stage 1 - Newbie (Unconscious incompetence)

You don't even know you are crap. You play the game and you lose but you have no idea as to why – you are still struggling to learn the rules, but you love the concept of the game and are in the 'honeymoon' period ...

Stage 2 - Doh! (Conscious incompetence)

You realise how BAD you are. Almost every one beats you senseless and gives you all those demeaning encouragement statements. You know what your mistakes are AFTER you have made them and you kick yourself for being so stupid.



The man himself! Charles Black in action at DogCon 3 - Ed

Stage 3 - The Thinker (Conscious competence)

You finally have a clue about the rules and about how you play, but you have to THINK about every single move. "If I move this unit, I will be inside his charge range. If I flee then there is only a 10-20% chance that I will be caught. So If I move this unit into the flank then I can counter-charge. But if I do and he then flees, then ..." it hurts your head A LOT.

Stage 4 - Remote control (Unconscious competence).

Reserved for multi-GT award winners like John Dale and Bill Edwards. Basically, you don't need to give too much thought to too many games. You more or less know how the game will pan out after deployment. You know where the crucial combat points will be. You know which troops to eliminate first. You know how you will neuter your opponent's strongest units and how you will get them to fight the battle on your terms. I actually think that only a few people can ever reach this level. It takes a really, really good mind, not just practice. Scary stuff indeed.



Another formidable general, Jeff Traish - Ed

PART B: LEARNING HOW TO LEARN!

So how do you move from the **Doh** stage to **Remote Control**? Pretty simple, you've got to learn HOW to learn about the game. Here are a few ideas that have served me OK.

Tip #1 - Game Experience

Learn about your army and other armies. Good players will know the strengths and weaknesses of their armies. Winning players will know this plus that of all the other armies. In a sense WHFB is a bit like a paper, scissors, rock game. Each unit has its strengths and weaknesses against each other unit. The more you know, the more likely you can get his scissors with your rock. This partly explains why the really good players don't need to take the strongest armies to win. They can make the most of their individual units. For example, a weak ranked unit of goblins worth 70 points can hit a 300 point chaos chosen knight unit in the flank and utterly destroy it as it starts the combat with a combat resolution of +5 (flank attack, 3 ranks, outnumbering).

Tip #2 - A Lot Of Reflection On Lessons Learnt And Observations

Improvement is based on reflection so write down lessons learnt and go back and read them from time to time. Having trouble beating the Undead? Talk to different players and think about your game. What do you have to do to beat them? What do they have to do to beat you and how do you counter this? After many serious beatings about a month's reflection on the web and talking to some good players I came up with my guiding principles against Undead (see side panel opposite).



A good general needs to have good tools and nothing is more "good" than a giant! - Ed

Tip #3 - Increasing Knowledge Of The Rules And The Actual Mechanics Of The Game.

This is not about becoming a 'rules lawyer' but it is about knowing what the rules allow you to do and not do. Often times, the experienced general will do something 'unexpected' that severely disrupts your plans and your battle line. For example, learn how to position your general so that he can unexpectedly charge out of his unit into combat. Gaining a better understanding of the rules will also stop opponent's pulling 'swifties' (intentional or not) on you that can seriously effect the battle.

Tip #4 - A Basic Knowledge Of The Game Maths

What is your combat resolution advantage before the combat? What is it likely to be after the combat? If averages work out what is the chance that opponent will make their break test? If they do, what will then happen?

Undead Observations

Not rocket science but I now win far more than I lose against the Undead. I now think of the Undead as being a two-fold army.

Magic Strong: Here YOU MUST kill their lesser necromancers.

Combat Orientated: You must sacrifice parts of your army to out manoeuvre them. My key change was to not try to kill the general straight away; rather go for their cheaper, more vulnerable magic users.

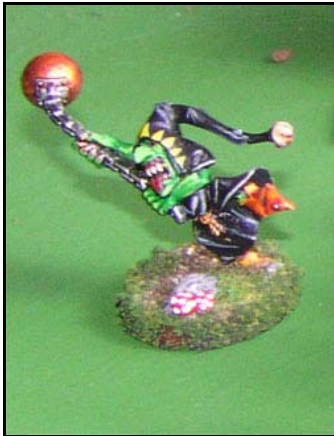
Here are my general tips vs Undead:

1. Assassinate all non-general characters first (unless he has a weak general) these are easier to kill and give the Undead their extra punch. Be it casting dice or extra combat punch. Use character assassins and/or hit unit with multiple units to dissolve quickly.
2. Know what to dispel and what to leave. Generally let him raise units but NEVER let him use movement spells.
3. Try to take 1 or 2 fear causing units (or fear resistant banners) and use them to minimise the effects of psychology tests by using them where the critical combats will take place
4. If you are going to charge a unit, try to double charge it with units that can win the combat during the first round both for unit strength and in case 1 fails
5. Always have 1 character with a cheap magic weapon (for ethereals)
6. If he/she has a lot of magic try to approach with two parallel combat lines so that if he does raise behind or in the flank you can counter charge.
7. Kill the general if you can!



Tip #5 – Bring It All Together

To bring all this learning to a head, you can distil your knowledge into a simple table. The table to the right contains my assessment of my Melbourne 2003 GT army, “the attack Goblins” containing 9 power dice and 9 Night Goblin and Goblin combat units. A magic strong horde army that is built around winning by combat...although that stomp does come in handy! While people might not be as obsessive (or as anally retentive!) as me, it gives you an insight into how you can plan to maximise the effectiveness of your troops (postscript – the Goblins went Massacre, Major Win, Massacre, Minor Win, Draw at Melbourne GT 2003 and came 2nd in battle points).



And finally the NUMBER ONE rule is to minimise thinking about the basics such as rules and an opponent's army and maximise the thinking about the turn ahead and contingency planning. To explain further, it needs to be remembered that we only have a limited thinking capacity, we can only hold and recall so much in our head. So, if your opponent is still thinking about the basics, he or she will leave very little room to the true battle smarts of planning the next few turns.

Opponents	Goblin's Major Weaknesses against this type of opponent	Opponent's Major Weaknesses against my Goblins	General Tactics for the Goblins against this type of opponent
1. Fast and Hitty (e.g. Chaos Cavalry)	▪ Losing by CR in straight up HtH. ▪ Not enough turns of magic at them. ▪ Can easily destroy my giant and chariots.	▪ High cost, low number troops (generally) ▪ Fanatics ▪ Outnumbering and diversions ▪ Magic/shooting against high value units	▪ Move fanatics towards their key troops. ▪ Use Giant's terror to negate his screens. ▪ Magic/shoot his hitty units. ▪ March block to give time for magic to be effective. ▪ Generally deny one flank. ▪ Get around flanks and envelop. ▪ Divert his key units with goblin units.
2. Horde (e.g. Skaven)	▪ Immune to my strengths ie plenty of disposable units ▪ Can easily negate fanatics ▪ Can envelop me	▪ Can target their key units with magic and shooting ▪ May not have hand to hand dominance ▪ Giant causing terror and chariots to break key units	▪ Shoot at key threats – if possible concentrate force on one area to create a gap in his lines and then plough in with my troops. ▪ Magic small units and key threats away. ▪ Load flank with my key hitting stuff and roll up from 1 flank and work towards centre. ▪ Use Giant's terror ▪ Concentrate force in one area, cause panic tests and then roll forward.
3. Magic Heavy (e.g. tzeentch, Vampires)	▪ Destroy my key units	▪ Will be susceptible to my key combat units (Giant and Chariots) ▪ I have reasonable magic defence ▪ May well be outnumbered by me	▪ Target magic users through my own shooting and magic. ▪ Protect my key combat units – engage quickly. ▪ Move troops up and envelop.



PART C: DURING THE GAME

OKAY – so game is ON. What to do? I break the game down into 11 key stages. Outlined below is an attempt to analyse what the good players do into different components. You will note that 90% of the work is in the planning stage and only 10% in the actual playing. This is why many (though not all) say that the course (not the outcome) of the battle is more or less settled after deployment.

1. Analyse my own forces

Before the battle, build an army on the basis of its relative strengths and weaknesses. Apply the following questions to the army book and craft away:

- What are my offensive capabilities? What are my hammer units that can win combats? What magic do I have that can make a difference?
- What are my defensive capabilities? How can I frustrate him? For example, can I use my rat swarms to stop him coming around my flank or getting to my screaming bell?
- What are my flanking capabilities? Do I have some fast cavalry to help hold up a flank through diverting his forces or can I sneak around by turn 5 for a rear charge?
- What are my screening capabilities? Against strong “shooty” armies, how can I protect my main troop blocks?
- What are my diversionary capabilities? How can I draw my opponent’s key troops away from the crucial battle lines? Do I have a Pegasus riding hero or fast cavalry that stops his “uber” unit(s) from doing what it wants when he wants to?
- How do I boost leadership?

4. Shooty Heavy (e.g. Dwarves, Elves, Empire)	▪ Can easily panic my key units.	▪ May not have sound magic defence. ▪ Once in HtH I should dominate. ▪ Given my number of units I can give him plenty of low point targets.	▪ Protect my key unit(s) from shooting – deploy behind scenery and/or use appropriate screens. ▪ Magic shooting away. ▪ Move giant around flank. ▪ Use chariots to destroy engines and shooting lines. Follow up with troops for HtH!
5. Balanced	▪ Can get rid of fanatics and move for T5 or 6 combat dominance.	▪ I can easily eliminate his cheap, disposable units and then concentrate on expensive game winners.	▪ Destroy small fast units through shooting and then magic. ▪ Selective diverting / killing of key hitting units. ▪ Envelop with troops.
6. ALL	▪ My poor leadership ▪ My frequency of blowing my Shaman’s head up!		▪ Don’t let him target my key units with shooting or magic. ▪ Don’t leave my key units too exposed at back of the board – if they flee they will go off the back. ▪ Generally, move forward quickly with all but wizards units (they go forward slowly) and get ready for T4/5 combat. Use magic to disable or reduce effectiveness of his units. ▪ BUT WIN BATTLE THROUGH COMBAT. ▪ Take Buzgobs. Only roll 4 dice for a spell when I MUST have the spell go off. Be wary about over-relying on the stomp. Only use it when it can have a real effect.
7.	▪		▪



Remain In Play
Warhammer Opinion Column by
Mike Allen

“Flaunted or Haunted?”

For those of us who have more grey hair (or “sun bleached” as I like to call it) than dark nowadays, it is interesting to reflect on how things have changed over the years and how they stay the same.

One thing that has changed and is changing again is the acceptability of “war games” as a hobby within the general community. Even though the subject matter of “war” gaming is probably more politically incorrect in some circles than ever, I find in recent times less and less surprise when people find out my hobby interests and even less negativity. Frankly, most people are quite interested.

Recently my local club organised an open day to put on display what we do and how we do it. This is our second open day so we were well prepared to put it on again. Like last year we looked for volunteers to put on some games and generally help out. What is interesting is that getting people to come along who are involved in the fantasy and sci fi games was relatively easy, however the historical gamers at the club were a very mixed bunch. To my surprise some weren’t all that keen to even discuss with their families and certainly weren’t going to be there on the day. Not all of them of course, but some of them who’ve been gamers for a long time. My shock was that in some way they were ashamed or embarrassed by the very hobby

2. Analyse opponent and his or her army

Look at his army list and ask and answer the following questions:

- What are his/her key offensive capabilities and if I was using them how would I use them against my army? How many ‘hammer’ units does he have? Will he likely ‘double team’ me (eg a spawn and a chariot)
- Where are his obvious weaknesses? What units are padding or what parts of his army are good but have some weaknesses – such as frenzied plague monks – how can I divert them and then smack them in the flank...
- Where are his major victory points? What do I need to capture in order to get a good win?
- Is he experienced or inexperienced general? Can I bluff him in deployment?

3. Force assessment.

Using the above start, stop and reflect on the following questions by comparing your list with his/hers:

- Which units will I use to slow down/stifle his key offensive units?
- Where are his/her VPs and how should I use my offensive capabilities to defeat the unit/s in combat?
- How can I deny him/her my victory points?

4. Survey terrain

Look at the layout of the board and ask and answer the following questions:

- Where will the battle be largely contested? Where would you like it to be contested?
- How can I use the terrain to minimise my weaknesses and maximise my strengths? Is there a clear corridor through which my offensive capabilities can move?
- Critically assess Line of Sight issues for both sides. For example, how can I ensure that my crossbows shoot for as many turns as possible? How can I stop myself from crowding them whilst still providing me with different attacking options?
- Are there any obvious advantages for him given his capabilities? If strong enough choose this side to deny him the benefits (eg cannons and hills).
- Answer the flowing questions: If you were your opponent which side would you want to be on? Which side gives you the most flexibility in attacking options?
- Select sides and pray for the dice. If you loose, all the thought you have given will set you up well for maximising your advantages and minimising his threats.



that they are so devoted to! This got me wondering how many others feel this way.

So gentle reader what about you? Does your hobby haunt you? Do you hide your figures, paints and brushes in a cupboard when friends are around? Do you avoid telling your family what you **really** did over the long weekend? Or do you flaunt your painting prowess and regale your family and friends with your spectacular victories and defeats. I'm very curious as I suspect there are many passionate gamers out there who are haunted by their hobby and this can't be good in the long run.

So.

I'm challenging all you haunted gamers to come out of the closet! Not that I'm suggesting that we should get a float in the mardi gras next year, but then again ...

We have a wonderful hobby that is intellectually challenging, creative, fun, socially active and accessible by just about anyone. Though not a cheap hobby it is not as expensive as more "normal" hobbies such as golf and doesn't take one away from family as much either. I've always been open and proud of my hobby. At work everyone around me knows I play with toy soldiers and how it's an important part of my life. Sure you get a few funny looks but everyone's hobby is a bit strange to people who don't understand it. So my message is don't be haunted, flaunt it! Just you Wood Elf players don't take this advice too far ...

Speaking of Wood Elves, it's good to hear that they look like getting their book later next year. Frankly it's about time GW got their act together on this front. I think gamers deserve a better deal from GW

5. Define overall objective for the battle

After all the above, make a high-level judgement ...

- What is my overall objective? (Massacre, Solid Victory, Minor Victory). Some players laugh when I say this because they say there is only 1 objective – a massacre. However, some of us who are more prudent might be a bit more careful ...
- What will be the 2-3 most important things necessary to achieve this? For example, my objective might be to win by a massacre by keeping one flank secure whilst attacking with my key hammer units on the right flank.

6. Select possible tactics

Having chosen your overall objective, then develop the best strategies to achieve it ...

- Where (and with what) will I attack?
- Where (and with what) will I defend?
- How do I maximise high leadership?
- How can I introduce an element of surprise/distraction?
- How do I concentrate my force?
- In thinking through these strategies, you might like to consider some of the classic army strategies covered so well by Andrew Bishop (IF #2 & IF#3).

7. Finalise a 'plan'

- Choose your final objective and broad strategies.
- Sketch out a rough deployment that matches your strategies.
- Keep it simple – just develop and keep in mind how you want the overall flow of the battle to go.

8. Deployment.

To my mind this is the critical part of the battle. If you are fluffing around in deployment you probably have not yet determined your objective and strategies. Pray you aren't up against a good player. Some of my key tips I use are ...

- Try not to put my key offensive units down until I see where his are.
- Initial deployment to be inconsequential troops and try not to highlight what my overall strategy will be.
- Maybe try a few diversionary ploys. Put some stuff on a flank so he thinks you might deploy there. Against the really good players, try to do a few different things that make him think. Although not too fancy otherwise he will rip you to shreds.
- Potential need to change both my strategy and deployment as opponent deploys – but be careful that I don't become overly reactive.

9. Re-consider strategy

- After deployment (yours and theirs) either adjust and/or confirm strategy to take account of deployment.
- Develop clear instructions for each individual unit:
 - What is their role?
 - How, where and when will they be moved?

in communicating their longer term plan for Warhammer Fantasy and part of that should include a tighter release schedule when new army books are produced. I'm going to be very interested to see just what GW do with their "war chest" and resources coming off the very financially successful LOTR game systems. Even though we'll see more LOTR in the first 6 months of 2004, I think it'll lose momentum as the year goes on. So what then for GW? Do they search again for the elusive 3rd major product? I'm not sure the Inquisition experience was a happy one (never mind Battlefleet Gothic!)

A word of warning to GW, if I may be so bold. It's not good to be a public listed company, well cashed up but meandering on the long term front. LOTR will have gained GW a lot of attention in the marketplace and profitable, cashed up games companies are not that common. I'm sure that the "T" word (takeover) has been heard in conjunction with GW in discussions in the "city" (London). 2004 promises to be interesting on many fronts within the hobby we all love dearly: stay tuned!

Mike

10. *Manoeuvre and conduct battle*

- Move in an integrated manner. Stay positive and keep focussed on the objective. Generally, keep the battle line intact.
- Never ever be concerned about throwing away an expensive unit to gain an even more expensive unit from him.
- Constant changing to address emerging threats and opportunities.
- Deploy all the tactics that are necessary – flank charges, fleeing, movement-focussed spells, diversions, use of terror and psychology tests,
- Have patience. Try to win in turn 5 and 6 – too early and you might be rushing your thinking and could well do yourself more harm than good.

11. *De-brief*

- What lessons did I learn? I am a bit anally retentive so I have recorded every single battle on an excel spreadsheet with a brief lessons learnt. It has been a great way to ensure that I can think through problem armies

I can hear you all saying YOU ARE KIDDING. If I did all this, the game would take 6 hours. You are right. That is why players in the conscious competence phase still lose games. They can't process this much information. The more you move to unconscious competence about the basics of the game (e.g. unit strengths and weaknesses), the more you will be able to process this is a blink of an eye. For example, assessment of terrain will take a really good player about 20 – 30 seconds and he will not need to think about his or her opponent's army – he/she knows them like the back of his/her hand.

Finally, I have heard players talk about luck or their lack of it. While dice rolls can and do effect individual turns, I ascribe to the views of Louis Pasteur "chance favours the prepared mind". In other words, in thinking though the next couple of turns you need to think about "what happens if the dice are against me" and "what contingency plans should I put in place if I lose this combat". This may not help you win the battle, but in my experience it is the crucial element in turning a dice-inspired loss to an honourable draw ☺.



Charles "Chuckster" Black is a distinguished Warhammer General. Amongst his proudest achievements are winning the award for "Ugliest General" at Dogcon 2003 and then backing that up with achieving the same award in 2004. Other, lesser known achievements include winning 2 GTs, finishing on the podium for all bar 2 (GTs) and topping the 'battle points' and 2nd overall in the Australian Warhammer Ranking system (see page 37)



Journey to the Land of Mordor

A Tournament Report from the 2003 New Zealand Grand Tournament

By Matthew Lubbock

One of the sights that I have come to expect and look forward to when playing in any of the large tournaments in Australia, is the presence of the Auckland Worriers Warhammer Club. The Worriers have built up a deserved reputation for fun play, a high degree of battle prowess and an inclination to socialise after a game. During the Sydney Grand Tournament (GT) I was able to spend some time with the boys and they convinced me that if I came to New Zealand for the GT, then I would not be disappointed. I could also then participate in the famous ‘Tasman Cup’ that is played between Australian and New Zealand players on an infrequent basis. So I was hooked, and due to the kindness of my better half, Leigh, I was given permission and instructions to go and have fun.

The tournament was played on the weekend of the 13th – 14th of September in Auckland. However, Charles and I would need to get in early on the Friday before in order to play the Tasman Cup. I met up with Peter Dunn and Charles Black at the airport, where Doug Rosendale was waiting to give us a lift to our hotel (once again thanks Doug). From there we got showered and were picked up by Chris Townley to be taken to a waiting cold beer, a mound of pizza and the Tasman Cup game at Alex Phoon’s house.



Action from the Tasman Cup with a very interested looking Chris “Big Show” Townley in the background. - Ed

The Tasman Cup is a two on two game, with each player using their 2000pt army that was to be used in the tournament being played. It is usually a laid back game, with the abuse from those on the sidelines sometimes being more the focus than the game. For this Tasman Cup Charles and I would be facing the pairing of Alex Phoon and Gordon Oldfield. We were cocky, confident and walking straight into the biggest drubbing the Tasman Cup has seen. Alex was playing a very balanced Lahmian Vampire Count (VC) list, whilst Gordon was using the new Lizardman list, based on Saurus infantry and an Old Blood on foot. Charles was reviving his fire warrior themed Chaos Undivided

Mortal army from DOGCON 2003 and I would be using my Bloodthirster led Khorne Daemon army that I had been using for most of the year¹. Charles and I inter-mixed our forces to have a solid infantry block advancing on the centre, and most of our cavalry moving down our right flank. Alex and Gordon kept their forces separate, but formed a very strong infantry line in the centre.

With some minor movement in the first two turns, it started to heat up when we charged the Bloodthirster and a chariot into Alex’s Grave Guard. Well, the Bloodthirster needed to spend more time in training, and the chariot obviously needed a longer run up, as we lost the combat by one. The assembled spectators started shouting for the daemon to go pop, with Chris Townley offering to kiss me if I failed the roll. Well as you can see I failed ☺. From there the Grave Guard went on to win the game (rolling up the entire centre of our line), with the Saurus Old Blood also holding his own. It was a timely reminder to me that the Bloodthirster was not invincible, and I need to protect the flanks of the bloodletter units. Whilst we were beaten, it was an extremely enjoyable game, made even better by the attempts of the assembled spectators to put us off our game. One last reminder to anyone playing Alex Phoon in the future. Don’t let him drink saki whilst playing, as he seems to roll dice like a daemon when he does.

¹ Bloodthirster, 3 x 20 Bloodletters (Std, Muso) and 4 x 5 Fleshounds



OK...it looks like Matt is enjoying this a little too much....seems the "Big Show" packs a little punch in the kissing stakes! - Ed

Whilst we were playing, the last of the Australians to be joining us over the weekend arrived. Chris Mitchell was playing in his second tournament in Warhammer 40,000, his first being the Melbourne GT. To see him coming over and having a great weekend was inspiring, as he has played only a dozen games in 5 years and still manages to enjoy himself. He had been picked up from the airport by Rob Saddler at 9pm, so a big thankyou to Rob as well. After the post game trash talk, Chris Townley once again showed the spirit of hospitality and dropped us back at the hotel. We all looked at each other and wondered what would be in store for us in the next few days, thinking if that game had been a prelude, then we were in trouble.

Saturday 13th September – Day 1

The New Zealand GT was to be played over six games and would include some novel scenarios. I personally feel that the more games the better, especially after travelling overseas to play. When we got to the hall, Charles and I were quickly introduced to other members of the Auckland Worriers, as well as "Chrusty" who was organising the competition. I could see that the standard of organisation was going to be good, when the first round had already been published and tables assigned before players arrived. This meant that that you could unpack your miniatures without having to move them again ten minutes later. With the unpacking done, the first round of army judging got underway. The Players Choice award is one of those that are coveted and contested hotly, and the NZ GT was no exception.



Charles Black's Fire Warriors



The "Kitty Litter"



A Maori Dragon Rider!



A full Minotaur Army.



Bryan Osbourne

My **first opponent** was Bryan Osbourne, a veteran of the NZ Warhammer clubs and a very nice guy. He was playing a nicely themed Von Carstein Vampire Count army². Bryan exhibited the soon to be common state of 'How do you kill a Bloodthirster' syndrome. Lacking ranked units, Bryan tried to kill him with the only tool in the cupboard, his VC Lord. To do this he set a lure in the centre using some of his wolves, and then set the coach and Zombie Dragon side by side to wait. I sprung the trap using two units of Fleshhounds, and managed to get one of them to over run far enough to tie up both waiting units. I had placed the BT to the rear of the units hoping for this, and managed to use him to destroy the VC in my subsequent turn. After this Bryan was very unlucky to have all his Black Knight die to crumbling, and

the bloodletters mopped up the rest of the army to secure a massacre. First game, a positive start and I have a suspicion that Chris may have rigged the draw to ensure that I played a great sport first up. Bryan and I then swapped armies, something I like to do early in a tourney to assess the weaknesses in my line up. We both learned from the experience and it helped us both later in the comp, with Bryan learning some good raise and move plays with the VC's.



² **Bryan Osbourne – Von Carstein Vampires**

Von Carstein Lord on Puff the Magic Zombie Dragon (Walking Death, Crown of the Damned and Dispel Scroll)

Wight Lord (barded steed, Heavy Armour, Sword of Kings, Shield of Moussilon)

Black Coach

2 x Black Knights (7 and 8) both with full command (one with the War Banner)

4 x 5 Direwolves

2 x Bat Swarm

5 Fell Bats



Reid Pittams

My **second game** for the day was against one of the veterans of the NZ tourney scene, Mr Reid Pittams. Reid had won this event and the NZ nationals previously and always places well when he comes over to OZ. He was playing a Khorne mortal army that was structured around getting two big blocks of knights into combat supported by characters and chariots³. We had to play a flanking scenario where one character and two units had to start off the board. This meant that I would have to play with a very depleted force as the BT was wandering in the wastes. The first signs that this would be a

pendulum like game was when I had set up Reid to commit his main knight unit with General to charge and overrun a hound unit and then into the jaws of two units of bloodletters (mainly due to Reid being sleep deprived). I did make a mistake here though, committing two units to the job that one could have handled, with one being sent into the front of the enemy unit. Of course I lost that combat by one, and the predictable happened with both units popping. My last 'letter unit then surmounted a hill and hoped to take back some point, with the last unit of hounds on the board providing flank protection. Well with protection like these puppies, who needs mainline units. They ended up charging and running down the Dragon Ogres, holding against two units of warhounds and a supporting character, and then killing them all. Midway through the game I was down about 900 points, but then the saviour arrived. I got to place the BT on my board edge, and then moved him to a position to force a charge from firstly one unit of knights, then subsequently a unit of fleshhounds, a chariot and the other unit of knights. He rolled magnificently and sent all comers to meet the Lord Khorne, almost single handedly regaining the lost points. The game ended as a draw. I really enjoyed this game, as I do with most draws I have played. It had provided a lot of laughs and some truly heroic moments, Warhammer at its best.



Reid Pittam's Chaos Army

³ **Reid Pittams – Khorne Warriors**

(Exalted Champ of Khorne (Steed, GW, Gaze of the Gods and Enchanted Shield)

Exalted Champ of Khorne (Steed, GW, Shield, Collar of Khorne)

2 x 5 Knights of Khorne (Full Command, 1 x Banner of Rage)

2 x 8 & 1 x 6 Warhounds

8 Marauder Horsemen (Flails, Shield, Full Command)

2 Chariots of Khorne

8 Fleshhounds

6 Furies

3 Dragon Ogres (GW and Light Armour)



Mike Young

My **third game** of the day was against another Undead army, so I had been lucky with the match ups so far (Khorne loves those who can't flee). This time I was to face Mike Young's Strigoi Vampire Counts, Gozer and the Black Strigany Clan⁴. Mike was up against it from the outset, and was most upset to find out that all daemons have magical attacks (which kept his ethereal creatures hiding for the majority of the game). I kept the BT in reserve for the first two turns, preferring to get the two infantry lines engaged and let the 'letters do what they do best, rack up some serious combat resolution. When the vampire was engaged, the BT manoeuvred into that combat and challenged. With two lucky killing blows being rolled, one got through the lord's ward save and the army started to crumble. The fleshhounds then mopped up the flanks, whilst the 'letters cleaned up the remnants of the centre to secure another massacre win. Mike had played well, but was badly matched up in this game. Another really enjoyable player and a great way to finish my first day of play in New Zealand.

So the end of day one I had had 3 great games and was sitting well on 50/60 points. The Auckland lads (who once again showed the true spirit of hospitality with a pick up and drop off) took us out to dinner to a nice little Chinese place. Once there we ensured that we didn't need to eat the next day (always important, as sometimes you don't get to). Charles, Chris and I then spent a bit of time talking over our experiences of the day and then proceeded to get a reasonably early night.

The Dead are rising from their graves to read Irresistible Force!

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⁴**Mike Young – Strigoi Vampires**

Strigoi Vampire Lord (Curse of the revenant, Summon Ghouls, Iron Sinews, Lvl 3)
 Level 2 Necromancer (Dispel Scroll, Book of Arkhan)
 Wraith (Cursed Book and Great Weapon)
 40 Zombies (Std, Muso) 30 Skeletons (Full command)
 2 x 10 Ghouls (Champion) 12 Dire Wolves (Champion)
 3 Bat Swarm 3 Spirit Hosts
 Banshee

Day 2

As usual on the second day of a tournament there was a feeling of anticipation about the crowd waiting to get into the hall. This may have been due to its raining, the lack of cover and the organiser being a tad late, but I would rather ascribe it to a mutual desire for more great gaming.



Chris Townley

Fourth game was against another giant of the NZ scene, Chris Townley. I think between him and Reid they normally win most NZ based tourneys and like Reid he always does well in OZ. Chris was running a Khorne Mortal army, with a healthy smattering of beasts to ensure some channelling of his knights, chariots and characters⁵. Prior to the game starting, Chris said we could just have a challenge of the champions to decide the outcome, all his heroes versus the BT. He was confident going in that the BT would kill a couple but go down hard. With characters counting as charging each other, initiative order was the decider. The BT took a couple of wounds from the chariot impact, but left the four heroes with a reminder of who was the biggest Khorne boy on the block ☺. Chris then took first turn and made a big mistake by moving a herd and hound unit central, whilst

backing his strike units off for turn 3 counter charges. He also had hidden his general a long way off to ensure that the ambush horn could be used. I flew the BT into terror range (which of those units then failed), and made sure that I had multiple charges up on key units for my next turn, focusing on the chariot mounted character. To further confound him, his ambushing herds failed their leadership roll and came on the furthest board edge from the action. I also had my best rolling of the tourney, with my miracle fleshhounds holding and then breaking a charging beast chariot, pursuing into a flanking beast herd and running it down. With the BT picking the teeth out of Chris' centre, the 'letters were able to move up the board and mop up for a massacre. Chris had made a couple of mistakes, but he also suffered some key dice failures that saw his herds marginalised for the game. I think I got fairly lucky in this one, as once again it was a match up that my army enjoyed.



Game five was one that more than a few people would have loved to watch. I was matched up against Phil Comins Tzeentch Mortal army that hadn't dropped a point in battle coming into round five. It was a classic mortal Tzeentch casting army, 14 power dice, some chariots and knights and the Staff of Change, but no ranked units⁶. I was confident that if I could get the casters into combat quickly, then his magic was all but useless as the majority of it is based on magic missiles. We were to play another scenario for this one, where two units were placed on board but then could only be used after the start of the second turn once they had



⁵Chris Townley – Mixed Khorne

Beastlord of Khorne (GW, Armour of Dmanation, Horn of the Great Hunt)

Wargor of Khorne (GW, Heavy Armour)

Exalted Champion of Khorne (GW, Juggernaut, Collar of Khorne)

Exalted Champion of Khorne (GW, in chariot)

Beast Herd 12Gor, 6 Ungor (Full Command)

2 x beast Herd 12 Gor, 6 Ungor (Full Command)

2 x Tuskgor Chariot

2 x 5 Warhounds

5 Knight of Khorne (Full Command)

Chariot of Khorne

8 Fleshhounds

8 Furies

⁶Phil Comins – Tzeentch Mortals

Lord of Tzeentch (Barded Steed, Armour of Damnation, Staff of Change)

2 x Exalted Champions of Tzeentch (both in chariots, can't remember items)

2 x Chariots of Tzeentch

6 Chosen Knights of Tzeentch (Full Command, War Banner)

2 x 5 Warhounds

4 Minotaurs of Tzeentch (Great Weapons)

4 Screamer

passed a leadership test. I got lucky as I won the roll for sides, and then got to place the contingent first. I had elected to use a 'letter and hound unit in the contingent, and these were now ten inches away from Phil's characters. I also got first turn and advanced aggressively. The hounds all moved into charge range of the characters and hounds and BT moved to behind the hill where the



contingent had started on Phil's left flank. Phil elected to take a very aggressive role also, moving his lord into within 6" of the BT's front arc and declaring charges with both chariots and warhounds against my screening fleshhounds. Phil's dice then deserted him as both chariots failed their fear tests, leaving the hounds to charge unaided. This meant that by my second turn all his hounds were dead and the fleshhounds were in combat with the chariot mounted characters. His big play was then made with a magic barrage from the Lord against the BT. This was a one shot move as if it didn't get off then he would be faced by the BT and a full unit of 'letters the next turn. I started to sweat when the d6 Sd6 missile spell left the BT on 2 wounds. I managed to dispell the next fireball, but the spell to pull the BT into the warp got off. I rolled the dice, needing a 9 to pass and stay on the board. The first came up a 6, the second continued to roll and hovered on a 4 before falling onto a 1. I could breathe again. The BT chopped the impertinent Lord to tiny pieces then overran to a flanking position on the two chariot characters. The supporting bloodletters also managed to overrun into the knights who were lurking behind the combat. After another couple of turns it was all over and had taken about 45 minutes to complete the massacre. It had been a big gamblers game, and unfortunately for Phil he didn't win his gamble. Another very fun and tense game that I hope will be repeated when Phil comes over to Australia next.



Tony Kitson

Game six was probably the only game where my luck got me through. I was playing Tony Kitson's very vanilla Bretonnian army⁷ that had been quietly doing very well. I was very lucky to get the roll for table sides, allowing me to place two units of bloodletters behind a defended obstacle, with the third placed to support an open flank (even when frenzied still a good option when against a cavalry heavy army). I gained first turn as well and moved most of the army into a central defensive position, with the hounds covering the flanks. The BT

was sent forward to threaten the Grail Knights, Duke and Knights Errant. Tony moved rapidly down my left flank and center, but held up the Grail knights to force the BT to charge. The BT killed all the Grail Knights over two combat rounds, leaving him able to rear charge the Errant Knights. These had been locked into a combat with the two 'letter units behind the obstacle, with the Duke on Griffon supporting. That combat lasted four combat rounds, and by the end it had drawn in most of my forces. Tony had continued to outflank my line with the Knights of the Realm unit (which contained a damsel and the BSB) and was ready to hit my entire line from the side. Unluckily for him the fleeing Duke landed squarely in front of the wedge and blocked their charge arc when he rallied. Also on the same turn the pursuing BT had landed with its flank exposed to the full Men at Arms unit. This unit passed its terror test, but in my final good luck for the game they failed their fear test to charge, leaving the BT able to charge the Duke and then overrun into the front of the Knights of the

⁷ Antony Kitson – Bretonnia

Duke on Griffon (Heavy Armour, Enchanted Shield, Biting Blade, Dragon's Claw)

2 x Level 2 Damsel (Both mounted and Dispell Scroll, 1 x Chalice of Malfleur, 1 x Potion Sacre)

Paladin (Barded Steed, GW, Heavy Armour)

BSB (Barded Steed, Heavy Armour, Mithril Great Helm, Sword of Might)

8 x Knights of the Realm (Full Command, Valorous Standard)

8 x Knights Errant (Full Command, Errantry Banner)

20 x Men at Arms (Full Command, Shields)

2 x 5 Mounted Squires (Musician, Shields)

5 x Squires (Foresters)

6 x Grail Knights (Full Command, War Banner)



Retreating Bretonnians!

repeatedly challenged. After seeing the champion get pulped, the BSB foreswore his honour, placed a boot firmly in the back of the Damsel and pushed her into combat first. Didn't help him in the end but was a fun image for the two of us. I think he has since been renamed, Brave Sir Robin. This match was a lot closer than the massacre scoreline indicated (only tipping to the massacre due to an objective worth 300 VP), and could have gone Tony's way at a few critical points. Another great game, and a very nice way to finish my first overseas tournament.

So after 6 games I had dropped 10 battle points (my best battle result ever) and was getting some very nice comments about the army. Also my opponents still came up and talked to me, one of the few true signs at a tournament that you are not a poor sport :). I was also getting a fair bit of interest from some of the players about coming over to Australia to play, which I would love to see. So for those who are coming to Melbourne for the GT next year, send me an e-mail (mlubbo@hotmail.com) and we'll see what we can do to return the mind blowing hospitality that was displayed by the good people of New Zealand. It was great to be able to go to our near neighbours and feel almost at home. Once again a big thankyou to all the Auckland Worriers and the others who made our stay so enjoyable.



Best Army Award Winner – Doug Rosendale

At the end of the day of a great weekend, it was time for the awards ceremony. I was invited up onto the stage to give out an award for the player who had killed my Bloodthirster in the quickest time. As it hadn't gone down in the tournament (a first in the five tournaments I have played him) the award went to Alex Phoon for severing his link to reality during the Tasman Cup. It seemed that I had just put my feet off the stage when Chris called me back up to receive the Butchers Award (highest battle points) which was a large roll of Spam ☺. The Best Army award went to Doug Rosendale for a uniquely themed Savage Orc army, with Doug also receiving Best Painted. Nick Armiger won Players Choice with a very nice Dark Elf army and Kirk McGunnig received Best Sport in front of a field of high sports scores (which reflected the great mood of the weekend). Lastly came the overall placings, with Phil Comins coming third, Charles Black placing second and myself being lucky enough to win. I was pretty happy (as most people are after winning a large tournament), as this was the last appearance for the boys of the Bloodied Hand and I was hoping for a placing before they got packed into the cupboard.



Matt on the Podium

This had to be one of the best tournaments I have attended, in terms of personal play (I don't think I made many mistakes over the weekend and placed well in all categories) as well as the friendly, yet competitive, atmosphere. Thankyou to all the players and for the NZ GW staff for organising a great event. Next up is DOGCON (24 -26 January, Sydney, Australia), where the rats will once again flood the board ☺. I hope to see you there.

Terrain Work Shop: How to make Hedges

By Geoff Tewierik



One of the first pieces of terrain I ever built was a hedge made of a scrap of filter foam that came as an extra with a new vacuum cleaner at work. I thought, “Cool I can do something with this”, so I folded it over glued it together and stuck it on a piece of cardboard. Since then I’ve refined the technique and made it more pleasing to look at and more durable for gaming purposes.

Now hedges in real life are completely different from the hedges that we play with on the table. There’s a good theory put forward by Jason Job (Squigger) on his website: <http://www.hotkey.net.au/~jasonjob/Hedges.txt>. But in Warhammer it’s easier to call something like a big bristly hedge a forest and save the name hedge for something small neat and well kept.

This method is only one way of many and varied ways to make hedges, but it will give you a good basis to experiment and try different things.

Materials:

- Filter Foam - Clark Rubber \$5 for 2ft sq
- 3mm MDF – any size you want from a Hardware Store
- Ruler
- Pen or Pencil
- Scissors
- PVA glue
- Jigsaw
- Sandpaper
- Paint – Taubmans Tea Tree Green
- Flock – Heki Dark Green
- Static Grass
- Basing Gravel
- Spray Varnish

Instructions:

The ideal size for this type of hedge in Warhammer is for it’s dimensions to be wide enough to cover a unit with frontage between 4-6 models on 20mm bases or the equivalent 4-5 models on 25mm bases and high enough for a standing model to see over approximately 20mm. This gives a width of approximately 80-125mm, and the hedge must be wide enough to encompass this and still have enough room to spare. This protects the unit from silly charges in the game because your opponent can see 1 or 2mm of the unit poking out from beside the hedge

The filter foam was cut into 130mm x 45mm rectangles. (see Image1)



Image 1: Foam cut into 130mm x 45mm rectangle

Each rectangle is folded over and glued together with PVA glue. A suitable light yet flat surface is put on top of the glued foam so that the glue dries the two halves together. I find that movement trays with a bottle two of paint work well. (see Image 2)

The bases for the hedges were cut out of 3mm MDF using a jigsaw. The dimensions of the base pieces are 150mm x 35mm. Give the cut edge a quick run around with the sandpaper to remove any ragged edges.



Image 2: Folded and glued rectangle

The glued filter foam is then glued onto the MDF base. (see Image 3)



Image 3: Filter foam glued onto the MDF base.



Image 4: Painted base and flocked foam.

The next thing to do is paint the MDF base with green paint – I find that Taubmans Tea Tree Green is a very good match to GW Goblin Green. Allow the paint to dry before proceeding to the next step. (see Image 4)

Once the paint is dry, cover the filter foam with PVA glue and then stick your flock to it, I use Heki Dark Green Flock. I find that dipping the

hedge into the flock doesn't quite do a good enough job. Grab a small handful of the flock and push the flock into the filter foam, pinching the hedge between your thumb and two fingers helps push it right in there. Allow the hedge to dry overnight.

Adding some gravel and static grass to the base can tie the hedge in with your army, and make it look more natural.

Once the hedge is dry give it two coats of Gloss Varnish and One of Matte Varnish – this provides a protective coat and prevents the flock that hasn't glued on very well from falling off – you could alternatively use a watered down coat of PVA – followed up by a Matte Varnish coat to take away the PVA shine. Then you are ready to use it in a game. (see Image 5)

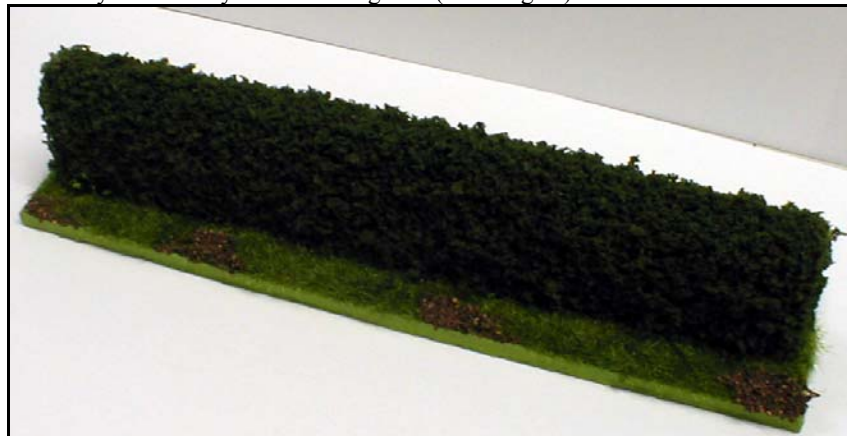


Image 5: Completed Hedge!









A Rudimentary Guide to Beasts of Chaos

By Brian H. Larsen

If you have not read Andrew Bishop's articles on tactics in issues 2 and 3 of Irresistible Force, then I recommend you do so. They are informative and give a sound generic approach to the game to go along with more specialized tactics like this one. With no further ado, here is an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the Beasts of Chaos armylist. Once you have read the armybook and familiarized yourself with the special rules and statistics then these are some of the factors which must be considered before making up an army of your own.

Strengths:

Speed and Mobility at cheap prices: The core of the Beast list is fast and mobile with M5 Bestigors and M7 Warhounds and Tuskgor chariots. Add to that M5 skirmishing Beast Herds and you have an army which can move across the battlefield fast. Since the core troops are also fairly cheap, this means you have potential to both outnumber and outmanoeuvre your enemy. The special and rare troops are fast as well with movement values of 6-8 and will prove more than adequate in keeping up the core troops.



A mighty Beastlord armed with the Axes of Korgor.

Flexibility: Beasts of Chaos is in itself a flexible list with few limitations. You can go the traditional Beastmen route with a Beastlord or Great Brayshaman as your leader or you can do an army based on a core of Minotaurs with a Doombull as your general. You also have the option of including mortals and daemons as special choices. One thing which Hordes of Chaos offers you that Beasts of Chaos does not, are flying units in the shape of the daemonic Furies and Tzeentch Screammers. Combined the two books offer what is one of the most flexible armylists in the game of Warhammer Fantasy.

Surprise Element: If you choose to use the Ambush special rule then it is a powerful tool when it works. Along the psychological effect of your opponent

knowing he may have enemy units behind his battleline in turn 2, may force him to play into your waiting hands. You can put your ambush units into a prime position for taking out your enemy's pesky war machines or wizards. Or you can set him up for a potential game winning front and possibly rank cutting rear charge. In any case the ambush forces your opponent to take it into account immediately and to promptly do something to defend against the potential threat. You can pretty much tailor your ambush anyway you want depending on the amount of risk you are willing to take and the strategy and tactics you want to use but in any case it is a very powerful weapon - when it works!

Magic: Magic plays more of a supporting role for the Beastmen as they are not inherently good spellcasters, but with the right magic items and/or magic lores then they can do very well. There are of course the well publicized Tzeentch combinations and potentially game winning Slaaneshi spells. You should not however disregard shamans using the generic Lores of Beast, Shadow or Death nor the Lore of Nurgle. With the right spells and items, they too can cause you opponent headaches aplenty.

Strong Close Combat troops at fairly cheap prices: The main strength of Chaos have always been close combat and Beasts of Chaos is no exception. Between the additional handweapons of the Gors in the Beast Herd and the Great Weapons on the Bestigors, Beasts of Chaos have a hard hitting core. Combined with M5, these units stand a good chance of getting the jump on opposing infantry and they can also put a dent in charging cavalry. With core chariots for support and Warhounds for diverting and harassment, you have the tools for controlling the flow of the battle. And being fairly cheap you can have a lot of them if you wish. The special and rare choices follow the same pattern in a variety of guises; culminating with the M7 S7 great weapon wielding Dragon Ogres, which will grab the attention of just about any opponent. And if that is not enough, you can always throw a Chaos Giant or a Dragon Ogre Shaggoth into the mix.



Did someone say "Shaggoth"?

Weaknesses:

Leadership: For all of its strengths, there is one major weakness which can easily become your undoing if you are not careful. Across the board the leadership values of your troops are average at best and it will affect the army in a variety of ways. Especially among your core troops leadership can become a problem for you with LD 7 being the highest value. With no funky special rules to offset this and a limited access to Marks of Chaos then facing fear causing armies like the Undead or armies with a lot of ranged firepower can be a tricky proposition indeed. Thus the use of the general and his leadership range is of paramount importance to your success. The special and rare units can help but only to a degree since they are mainly fear causing themselves and not immune to panic. The Shaggoth and Giant can stand on their own and are sure to draw some of the attention away from the rest of your army. But alas you cannot make an army of them.

Unfortunately characters do not do much to change the picture either. If you play less than 2000 points or use a Great Bray-Shaman as your general then you are stuck on leadership 7 or even 6 if you only use hero level Bray-Shamans as your characters. It gets better with a LD8 Beastlord but he cannot be everywhere at once and thus you have to keep those units close together which need to benefit from his leadership. Alternatively you can supersize your general with a Doombull or a Shaggoth Champion as your general. Both of them have LD9 but they are expensive, have their own drawbacks and precludes you from using the ambush special rule. And as with the Beastlord, those units that you want to benefit from their leadership must be kept in range of the general. Alternatively you can also make an army with a Doombull and a core of fear causing Minotaurs with LD8 but this means you won't have many units with ranks if any at all.

Staying Power: Once in combat, staying power can become a problem for you. You may have good weapons options for you core troops but the Gors are only S3 and the great weapons of the Bestigors strike last in subsequent rounds of combat. Toughness 4 will only get you so far when you opponent strike back and with limited armour options then casualties are bound to happen. Thus if the enemy hits you hard enough then obviously your line will crack. That will happen to any army of course, but given your relative low leadership values, then break tests and possible panic tests as a result of broken units can put your army on the run pretty fast. Again the use of the generals leadership is paramount and you should give serious consideration into including a battle standard bearer.

Element of uncertainty: Low leadership values are not the only thing which can throw a spanner in the works. Both the Beast Herds and the Centigors have additional rules which you must take into account. The Beast Herd have the Unruly rule that can make them surge forward towards the enemy and there is nothing you can do about it. The Centigors are drunk which, much like the real world, can make them a tad difficult to work with. And the Chaos Trolls are no different from their greenskin counterparts.

If you choose to use the ambush rule then it can be a nightmare if it does not work. As the ambush uses leadership tests and as your ambushing units use their own leadership, then you are looking at leadership 5-7 for their ambush checks. If you fail then a unit can become useless if it appears behind your own battleline. Therefore using the ambush requires at certain amount of risk assessment and management. Basically be sure that you can either afford to lose the benefit of units in ambush, or if your gameplan really depends on the ambush working, then make sure you take the necessary items to give you the best chance of making it work for you. And remember, if your general is dead or fleeing then he cannot start the ambush, and at the end of the game any ambushing unit not on the table counts as destroyed for the purpose of victory points.



Shamans can fill an important supporting role for your Beast Herds.

Ranged attack options: You are playing Chaos, you do not have any! Well, you do, but it is largely limited to magical attack options. Given the lores available then you are most likely to base your tactics around your close combat prowess with magic filling a support role rather than the other way around.

The characters, units and monsters - pros and cons.

With the overall basic pros and cons in place, it is time to take a closer look at the specifics.

Lord Characters:

Beastlord: Your basic lord level fighter with 4 attacks at S5 and T4. His statline is not scary but at 95 points he is a good buy and will suffice in most situations. Apart from marks and magic items, he does



Beastlord

not have many options out of the ordinary. In fact the only option is a Chariot if you follow Chaos Undivided. No Chimera or other monstrous mounts are present in BoC sadly. Luckily you have access to some decent items in both HoC and BoC with which to boost your killing potential and protection against death inducing weapons. Marks give him the same benefits as Chaos Lords.

Doombull: As a fighting alternative to the Beastlord, there is the Doombull. With S5, A5, LD9 and 180 points, he is definitely an alternative worth considering. He has excellent killing potential and will help boost your army's mediocre leadership. You also get access to core Minotaurs with the Doombull furthering the close combat potential of your beast army. There is one big problem though. You do not have access to any forms of protective

talismans or armour, save for heavy armour and a shield. With T5 and 4 wounds it will only get you so far if you get locked in combat with your opponent's killer lord or get caught in his shooting gallery. Get him up against rank and file and he will do just fine even if that is not always as easy as it sounds. Do not send him into combat unless he has either a decent chance of winning combat or without support if he is going against fully rank units.

Great Bray-Shaman: Prefer magic? Then the Shaman lord is for you. He has access to Slaanesh and Nurgle if you mark him or Shadow, Beast or Death if you go the Undivided route. None of the lores offers much in pure destructive power, but are more subtle in nature. But as anyone who has come into contact with a Slaaneshi or Shadow spellcaster can attest, the subtle spells can often be the most dangerous spells of all. Another thing which sets a Bray-Shaman apart from other spellcasters is his abilities as a fighter. With T4 and 2 S4 attacks at WS 5 and weapons options then he is no pushover against wizard hunters or opportunistic rank and file troops. Combine him with a Braystaff and Chaos Armour and you get the option of a 2+ armour save in close combat or a 4+ armour save and a great weapon giving him S6. Combine him with the Bear's Anger spell and he becomes a combat monster if

you get the spell off! On the downside he has a lowly LD value of 7 so will not help you in that department whatsoever. And keep him away from Banshees and Caskets too if you are not playing Slaanesh.

Shaggoth Champion: Like big terror causing monsters? Then you should consider the Dragon Ogre Shaggoth Champion as your general. On top of being huge and terror causing, he has many of the same qualities and stats as the Doombull but with 6 wounds. But he also has the same drawbacks the Doombull too. He needs support in combat if you are not flanking your enemy. Likewise a 3+ armour save is the best you get and you do not gain access to magic items either. Remember too that a Shaggoth Champion takes a Lord and a Rare choice. You do however get access to Shaggoth specific marks which are reminiscent of marks for Daemon Princes. To give an example: A Shaggoth of Slaanesh with a great weapon will always strike first at strength S7. Scared yet? See also the Shaggoth entry elsewhere in this article.

Hero Characters:

Wargor: Your basic hero level fighter with 3 attacks at S4 and T4. His statline is not scary but at 60 points he is a good buy and will suffice in most situations. Sound familiar? It is just that. He does not have any options out of the ordinary though including no chariot option. He has the usual options for hero level Chaos Marks of course.

Wargor Battle Standard: With the average or worse leadership amongst your core troops then a Battle Standard is well worth considering and you also have magical banners which your herds can really benefit from.

Bray-Shaman: Your basic 1st/2nd level wizard. Good as both a scroll caddy and support for a Great Bray-Shaman. Like the lord he is also a capable fighter with 2 WS4, S3 attacks and weapons options. He is no pushover either with T4 but unfortunately he also has LD6 making him prone to panic attacks!

Beast Units (core):

Beast Herd: What was once three units have now become one. The bread and butter of any non Doombull lead beast army and thus deserving of a lot of attention. A herd consists of a minimum of 5 Gors and 5 Ungors with no other limitations. As far as equipment goes I would recommend going for offence as it means going for 2 attacks per Gor and nothing but spears for the Ungors since the shield won't do much to protect you either in combat or against shooting. The Ungors have a statline comparable to a human and the Gor to that of an Orc but both with enhanced movement and WS4 for the Gors. And always remember to get the Foe-Render champion if you want LD7.



Beast Herds are the "bread and butter" of the non Doombull beast general.

There is no golden unit size or mix of Gors and Ungors as it depends on what task you want your herd to accomplish. As a main fighting unit then 25-30 gives you plenty room to work with. As an ambush, flanking, march blocking or screening unit then anywhere between 10-25 will do depending on the amount of risk you are willing to take. The mix of Gors and Ungors may vary too depending on how many points you have to spend and what armies you will be facing.

Ungors are great as "stuffing" in large units but it will make you prone to panic tests against heavy shooting and magic. Going for a majority of Gors will make the unit more resilient but also more expensive obviously.

The Beast Herd has quite a few special rules to go with it but for the most part they work well. The ambush rule has already been touched upon elsewhere and this leaves the Unruly and Raiders special rules. Unruly can make a herd move as fast and far as possible towards the nearest enemy, charging it if a legal charge was possible. It is characterful but it does also mean that you will not always be in total control of the army. The Raiders rule is what makes the herd unique. Basically a herd is a skirmishing unit consisting of models with mixed profiles. There are of course exceptions to the normal skirmish rules though: You always line up a minimum of 4 models wide and 25% of the models must be within charge range for a charge to be successful; otherwise it will be a failed charge. Unlike normal skirmishers you gain a rank bonus when in combat but only up to a maximum of 2 and Gors are always put in front with Ungors behind. If any Ungors are in the second rank then they may use their spears as per the normal fight in ranks rule. If your opponent can attack both Gors and Ungors, then attacks against the herd are allocated as you would if you were fighting two different units and casualties are removed in the same manner. Also a herd cannot be joined by a character which is not a raider himself which just means that Doombulls and Shaggoths cannot join basically. Ranged non-template attacks against the unit is resolved with 1 hit against 1 model starting with the Ungors first and then against the Gors if necessary. A lot of exceptions to keep track of but it is not as hard as it may sound.

All in all the Beast Herd is fast for an infantry unit with M5 and mobile as a skirmish unit. And as such they can preform a multitude of roles and tactics thus adding strength to your opponents headaches. But it is also unpredictable and prone to failing leadership tests. Once again risk assessment and management is in order. Either make sure you can afford to lose it or deploy it and move it into a position where it has a decent chance of winning combat resolution. When in doubt, go with the averages. And also remember to make large movement trays to accommodate your herds as moving that many skirmishers is the stuff nightmares are made from!

Bestigors: The basic hammer unit of the Beast army. With WS4, S4, T4 and great weapons, they will hit hard against most enemies. They do have their drawbacks though as you need 1 Beast Herd for every Bestigor Herd regardless of whom your general is and only one unit may be marked and have a banner. Also with only heavy armour for protection then they can be in trouble in protracted combat situations if they do not have some form of support. But they are as fast as Beast Herds so getting the jump on enemy infantry is certainly possible. The size of the unit may vary too but 20-25 models in a hammer unit should get the job done and 10-15 when filling the role of a support unit to a large Beast Herd or a rampaging Shaggoth. One unit can use the same marks as ordinary regiments but the marks of Khorne (Khornhors) and Nurgle (Pestigors) bare mention since they both received new models. If you can accept the risk of frenzy then Khornhors will hit about as hard as Chaos Warriors at two thirds off the price and with Pestigors in a unit of 25 you can really benefit from the fear and outnumber bonus.

Tuskgor Chariot: The TC has changed somewhat throughout the years. From one of the heaviest chariots in game to its current medium sized incarnation of an Orc Boar chariot. It will still present you with good value as a supporting unit at 85 points, working best when charging in unison with other units or chariots. The chariot is born with the mark of Chaos Undivided and has no other options in this regard. In its latest incarnation it also uses the same style of different profiles for the fighter and driver as was introduced with the Tomb Kings book. It is now crewed by a Bestigor and an Ungor. The Tuskgors are now the same as Boars hence the Orc Boar chariot remark. A caveat to be aware of is, that you only have M7 and chariots cannot march. With the rest of the army being M5 or better then the TCs cannot keep up if you go full steam ahead. So make sure you leave lanes for the chariots to charge through or hold the units back which the chariots are supposed to support.

Warhounds: Warhounds are the same as in Hordes of Chaos with the exception they can ambush. Warhounds can fill a variety of rolls. You can use large units charging with support and providing ranks and outnumber to a hard hitting Tuskgor Chariot or Shaggoth. Medium sized units can be used on flanks to hunt skirmishers, scouts, fast cavalry and war machines and small units can be used for screening, diverting or march blocking. Be aware that they are cheap and fairly fast but fragile and with LD 5 they will not pass many LD tests without the general in range. Your basic throw away unit.

Monster Units (special):

Chaos Ogres: Still the omnipresent fear causing big brute unit of the Warhammer world. In this Chaos version they come with all the trimmings including options for a command group, heavy armour and shield to go along with the usual great or additional hand weapon. Ogres like many other units in Beasts of Chaos, can be used in many ways. On their own they will prove themselves as hard hitting flank supporters and when charging with support they can put a scare into most main enemy units. Go for the great weapon option as they are likely to strike last anyway with their I2. The armour options will give some protection against light shooting and magic but with LD7 then they will run on you occasionally.

Minotaurs: Minotaurs can fill the same roll as Ogres can and then some. They are slightly more expensive but they have enhanced stats which give them more uses. With WS4, I4 and LD8 and access to the same mark of chaos as your general then Minotaurs can make very formidable unit indeed. With I4 there is actually good reason for



Ogre Champion armed with Hand Weapon and Shield

considering additional hand weapons when facing lots of T3 infantry. You still need to use support for those Minotaur units attacking the main enemy units unless you create a unit with a rank and standard. You do not however have the same command and armour options with musician being left out and light armour the only protection. There are minotaur specific marks, though only the nurgle mark is different from the normal regiment marks giving you a 5+ scaly skin save. Only in this combination is light armour worth buying. With a Doombull as your general then Minotaurs become core giving you the option of making an army entirely of fear causing big guys if you desire!

Centigors: A new unit whose closest Warhammer relatives are the Bull Centaurs of the Chaos Dwarfs and Chaos Centaurs from the 4th ed. Chaos book. They are sort of a cross between medium cavalry and fast cavalry. They do not have the manoeuvrability of fast cavalry but they do move through woods without penalty. However they are cheap at 17 points and hit pretty hard on the charge with 1 S5 (spear attack), 1 S4 (hoof attack) and 2 S4 attacks in subsequent rounds of combat. They have light armour and the options for a shield and throwing axes furthering their uses. With M8 they have good range too. On the flank they can work without support, but in your main battle line they should have support since they will not last long in further rounds of combat with just a 5+ armour save or 4+ if you go the hand weapon and shield route. In other words you need to break your opponent on the charge. There are further drawbacks as in line with the rest of the Beast units they are restricted to LD7 and they are drunk to boot!

Chaos Trolls: When they work, they work well. When they do not, which is often, they are a royal pain in the rear as a lot of Orcs and Goblins players can attest to. They fall into the same category as Ogres and Minotaurs but they cannot perform the same tasks since you need to keep them close to your general for the LD4 stupidity to become much less of a factor. Do not bother with a dedicated trollsitter

as it would be a waste of the character. Trolls are best used in close proximity to a LD9 general like the Doombull; working support for either the generals unit or a unit close by. If they reach combat then both the 4 S5 attacks or the no armour save vomit attack if fighting cavalry will do damage. With regeneration Trolls can hold a unit up - especially units with only one or no rank - for a turn before support arrives. Keep your general in range though as the trolls still need to pass their stupidity test and possibly a break test as you risk losing combat resolution once combat has been fought - even with regeneration. Keep them away from fully ranked infantry units if you are not charging them in the flank. In short, Trolls can be fun but Ogres or Minotaur are more efficient units at the end of day.

Big Monster Units (rare):

Dragon Ogres: Yet another unit of big guys in the Beast army. And as per tradition, the Dragon Ogres are the biggest and baddest of them all. They have much the same uses as Ogres and Minotaurs but they move faster and hit harder. With base M7 and S5 Dragon Ogres also act like cavalry with their 14" charge and 3D6 pursuit move. You will never go wrong with great weapons when you got I2 and this makes Dragon Ogres very scary for your opponents heavily armoured troops. Thus when you field Dragon Ogres they will get immediate attention from especially ranged attacks. Dragon Ogres still have 4 wounds and with the option of a 4+ armour save they will not go easily even if they are T4 now. They hit hard but as with Ogres and Minotaurs you still need to consider support from a chariot or a herd. Dragon Ogres are also very expensive, costing 79 points when fully equipped, so you got to make them count as you will usually not have more than 3 or 4 of them in your army. Dragon Ogres also suffer from Storm Rage

which means that they are immune to lightning attacks like Warp Lightning but they become frenzied if hit and thus need to be treated with care when facing Skaven and Heavens wielding spellcasters.

Dragon Ogre Shaggoth: The exact same as the Shaggoth Champion described earlier but it takes up at special and a rare choice in your army instead and it does not have access to marks. It is slightly less powerful than its previous incarnation but still very powerful in its own right. It is also immune to psychology and is subject to Storm Rage too. The Shaggoth does have one big drawback though: Size and attention. Like anything dangerous the Shaggoth comes with a bullseye on its chest and big neon arrows in case you are fighting in a poorly lit room. You can use this to your advantage by drawing attention away from the rest of your army but at base 295 points it makes for extremely expensive decoy if your Shaggoth dies before seeing an honest fight!

Chaos Giant: Pretty much close to a carbon copy of the Greenskin counterpart though according to the new description, Giants are suddenly quite common among Chaos warbands. Once you have gotten used to the idea of a Giant in an army that is not green, then the Giant will present you with some interesting options game wise. Like the Shaggoth it is big and will grab your opponents attention but it is close to a 100 points cheaper. A Giant is more random in combat than a Shaggoth but unlike the Shaggoth you can waltz your Giant into combat unsupported because he is stubborn on LD10. This means that even though he may not cause as much damage, there is a good chance that he will be around after combat resolution - even if he is prone to falling over every now and then. This will give the chance of holding up a big unit while you set up a flank or rear charge. But as with the Shaggoth



The much maligned Chaos Troll.

you are not always assure that your Giant will see combat. The Mutant Monstrosity upgrade is worth considering for its 5+ scaly skin save and a body slamming Giant can cause alot of damage.

Spawn of Chaos: Spawns are Spawns. Sometimes they are great at holding up enemies and providing speed bumps. And sometimes they can't fight their way out of a wet paper bag while seemingly never leaving your own deployment zone. Always good for a bit of fun!

Beastmen Toys - Magic items pros and cons.

Weapons:

Axes of Khorgor (Lords only, on foot only): Still (too) expensive but if used against rank and file then the axes can prove very useful with its re-roll to hit and +1 attack; especially on a Doombull since it fits the model so well. The Black Maul (Lords only) is powerful if you can live with frenzy but not recommended if you play Khorne or Slaanesh as frenzy will give no benefits. Still worth considering if you play Undivided, Nurgle or Tzeentch. The Bonecrusher Mace (Lords only) is a curious but pretty much useless weapon in anything but siege combat. Avoid unless you really want to waste your lord on a hunt for tanks or castles. Great Fang (no limitations): Chaos gets a can opener! Your standard no armour save weapon. Recommended! Slaughtherer's Blade (on foot only): Cool name, nice weapon! It is basically a magical great weapon with build in Regeneration as you regain lost wounds on a 4+ for every unsaved wound you caused in combat. It cannot give you as many wounds as the Blade of Blood from HoC but it gives you S7 and wounds regained does not count towards combat resolution. Recommended for characters with 3+ wounds - especially nurgle characters and Doombulls. Scimitar of Skultar (no limitations): Seems like an afterthought. It is cheap at 15 points but in the edition of the great weapon then you should avoid this one or at least consider one of the generic weapons like Sword of Might.

Armours:

Pelt of the Dark Young (Beasts only): Cheap and useful with a 6+ scaly skin save which can be combined as normal and magic resistance (1) for both bearer and unit. Trollhide Armour (no limitations): An alternative to the generic Talisman of Protection as it combines heavy armour with 6+ regeneration for 20 points. Don't use it on mortal characters though as it overrides their Chaos Armour. The Fur of Sharrgu (Beasts only): Unless you plan on having a character doing a commando raid against a shooty army then avoid this item. Chaos Armour (Beast only): Standard Chaos Armour for Beastmen. Cheap and you can give to a Shaman. You can only have one though, seing it is a magic item as far as Beastmen are concerned.

Talismans:

Crown of Horns (Beasts only): Standard 5+ ward and +1 to rally tests. With the low leadership of the army then this item is definately worth considering. Rune of the True Beast (Beasts only): Could well prove useful if you wish to hunt swarms with a character or risk facing Dragons or Carnosaurs. Horn of the Great Hunt (Beastlords and Wargors only): If you rely heavily on the ambush then this item is a must have for your general as you get +1 LD for ambush leadership checks. Bloodhunt Horn (no limitations): A nasty item that can force an enemy unit to automatically fail a rally test once during the game. Useful but obviously wasted against the undead. The Dark Heart (Beasts only): Steel Standard re-run. An extra D3" is always useful when charging. Always.

Wizards Arcana:

The Plague Chalice (Nurgle only, once only): If you are envious of the Book of Hoeth then consider this item. It may only work for one magic phase and you may suffer a wound because of it. But it will give you the same benefit of irresistible force on any double save for double 1. Make sure you got a reasonable amount of casting dice to work with though, otherwise it is not worth it. The Goretooth (Beasts only): Gives you hatred and bloodgreed and you must swap one of your spells for Bear's Anger from the Lore of Beasts regardless of what lore you may be using. If you can get it off then you can turn your Bray-Shaman or a close by character into a combat monster. With a casting value of 6+ then it will be fairly easy to cast with 2 dice and could well draw some dispel dice. Staff of Darkoth (Beast Shamans only): Works as a braystaff and gives an extra spell named The Wild Call. It works like

Unseen Lurker from Lore of Shadows but it is cast on 9+ and only works on Beast Herds, Bestigors or Warhounds. Movement spells are powerful indeed and well worth considering. Don't use it with only a second level Bray-Shaman in the army as it is bound to draw a dispel scroll or a lot of dispel dice. With 4 to 6 levels of magic then there is a decent chance that you will get a chance to use it.

Banners:

The Beast Banner (Beasts only, BSBs only): A nasty banner when combined with Bestigors. Especially Khorngors can break most enemy units on the charge with +1A to all models charging - including characters! Flesh Banner (no limitations): A useful banner, especially against elite infantry or cavalry as any unit in contact with the bearer takes D6 S4 hits in your magic phase. These hits can prove the difference between the enemy's outnumber and/or rank bonuses before the combat phase begins. Vitriolic Totem (Beasts only): Funky name for a useful item. Put it on a Battle Standard and stick him in a Beast Herd with Gors carrying 2 hand weapons and watch the poison do its magic. Can also be used on Bestigors if you have a habit of rolling a lot of 1s to wound and it is a fitting banner for a unit of Pestigors. The Gore Banner (no limitations): Despite its description this banner will work with any unit. Re-rolling failed panic tests is always a useful thing and any Nurgle and Tzeentch unit will welcome this banner with open arms and tentacles! Preyseeker (Beasts only, BSBs only): Put it on your Battle Standard and put him in an ambush together with a unit when you really need the ambush to work. Also good if your general carries the Horn of the Great Hunt.

Conclusions of a Dangerous mind.

So what army should you make? I cannot tell you. Only you can find an army suitable to your tactics and tastes. What I have done is just to give you a few pointers with regards to the armylist and the opportunities it presents you. I have found that what works for one person may not work for another thus the need for you to experiment on your own. If things do not work out early then do not despair. Keep tweaking your army until you find a combination that works for you. With this article and those of Andrew Bishop mentioned earlier then you have some tools to start with.

That is it. I will get off my soap box now and leave you to ponder a possible future with the Beast. If you wish to discuss it further then drop by the fantasy forum at www.players-society.com.

Thank you Brian for a great article and introduction to the new Beasts of Chaos army book. In the next issue of Irresistible Force I will be outlining my thought processes, trials and tribulations following my foray into the world of the Beastmen. So look out for that in Issue #5 as a great follow up to Brian's Beastmen article.. – Ed



Collecting a Dark Elf Force: Part 2 – Dark Elves @ MOAB 2003

By Andrew Galea

This is a follow up from my “Collecting a Dark Elves Force” article from issue 3 of Irresistible Force. As many of you know I was planning to field the final rendition of my Dark Elf army at the “Mother Of All Battle Games” (MOAB) 2003 tournament. A large 3 day tournament held in the southern suburbs of Sydney every year.

Well low and behold I managed to achieve 1st PLACE OVERALL!!! It was a great experience for me winning my second tournament and doing so with the Druchii was something I will never forget. So how on Earth did this happen I hear you say? Well to be truthful, a combination of solid painting, a good sports score and a lot of luck! Seriously, there were a few things tactically that dawned on me prior and during the tournament that I would like to pass on in this article along with a “wrap” and final appraisal of my experiences with fielding Dark Elves in WHFB.

MOAB 2003 – Dark Elves Army - 2500 Pts

Here is the army list that I fielded at MOAB 2003.

Characters

- 1 Highborn on Manticore @ 401 Pts
Equipment: General; Great Weapon; Heavy Armour; Sea Dragon Cloak; Crown of Black Iron, Shield of Ghrond
- 1 Noble on Dark Pegasus @ 165 Pts
Equipment: Heavy Armour; Sea Dragon Cloak; Sword of Might, Enchanted Shield
- 1 Sorceress @ 180 Pts
Magic Level 2; Lore of Dark Arts
Dispel Scroll, Seal of Ghrond
- 1 Sorceress on Dark Steed @ 187 Pts
Magic Level 2; Lore of Dark Arts
Darkstar Cloak, Dispel Scroll

Core

- 10 Warriors @ 115 Pts
Spear; Light Armour; Shield; Musician; Lordling
- 10 Warriors @ 115 Pts
Spear; Light Armour; Shield; Musician; Lordling
- 5 Dark Riders @ 141 Pts
Spear; Repeating Crossbow; Light Armour; Standard; Musician
- 5 Dark Riders @ 141 Pts
Spear; Repeating Crossbow; Light Armour; Standard; Musician
- 5 Dark Riders @ 141 Pts
Spear; Repeating Crossbow; Light Armour; Standard; Musician
- 5 Dark Riders @ 141 Pts
Spear; Repeating Crossbow; Light Armour; Standard; Musician

Special

- 8 Shades @ 120 Pts
Repeating Crossbow; Light Armour



My Manticore mounted Highborn.

The main difference between the army I fielded (left) and the army I had settled upon in my last article (IF #3) was swapping the noble in a chariot for a second sorceress on a dark steed. I felt I needed more magic potency in both my phase and defending my opponent's phase. There was just not enough unpredictability with the initial army design and the second sorceress added a little more balance to my army throughout the phases. Maximising the abilities of an army in each of the phases is very important when talking about Dark Elves in my opinion.

With the force I settled upon I had great movement, good shooting and a few very strong hand-to-hand units. Coupled with 7 power dice and 2 sorceresses I felt confident I could pose solid questions to my opponent in every phase of the game.

12 Witch Elves @ 236 Pts
 Frenzy; 2nd Weapon; Standard; Musician;
 Hag (Witchbrew)
 War Banner

Rare

12 Black Guard @ 213 Pts
 Halberd; Heavy Armour; Musician; Master

2 Reaper Bolt Thrower @ 200 Pts

Casting Pool: 7
 Dispel Pool: 5
 Models in Army: 84
 Total Army Cost: 2496



Sorceress Mounted on Dark Steed.

managed to keep my nose clean for most of battle, picking off all the dog type units while my bolt throwers did some damage to the big Chaos Knight units. I was heading for a minor win late in the game when a bad mistake by me resulted in me losing my general on the Manticore, that was a bad blow and pegged things back to a minor loss. I guess the message from this game is to not have any delusions regarding the effectiveness of Elves against heavily armoured opponents. I simply did not fight the Chaos Knight units! The beauty of the elves is that you have the choice what you fight and don't, and if your opponent is dictating to you what you meet in H-T-H then your movement phases are tactically failing you. (7-13)

Game 3: vs Orcs & Goblins – I own an Orcs & Goblins horde so I had a very good understanding of the army's strengths and weaknesses. I used my speed and manoeuvrability to stay out of trouble and hit hard where I could. I controlled most of the board this way, fighting what I could when I felt confident and avoiding danger when it looked too tough! The witch elf poison attacks are more than useful against orcs because of their lower WS and next to no armour save. A satisfying game in the end as I managed to route his entire army. Massacre (20-0)

My opponents during MOAB were varied in both the armies they fielded and their abilities as a general (which is common of tournament play) and I was most happy to report that all 8 games were of the highest quality and thoroughly enjoyable. It is an old cliché I know, but my enjoyment of the games during a tournament is far more important to me than the results. I play to enjoy the game, and if I am going to give up a long weekend to participate in some battle gaming, I don't want to waste my spare time getting frustrated and experiencing tension during a game of toy soldiers! Fortunately the vast majority of players in the Australian tournament scene (that I have come across) share similar sentiments.

Anyway, here is a brief run down of the games:

Game 1: vs High Elves – Young guy who fielded fairly balanced High Elf army with a dragon. I basically played cat and mouse with the dragon whilst the rest of my army dealt with his other troops. I just remained patient in this one. The hatred re-rolls make a lot of the Dark Elf troops very effective, notably the Dark Riders. After dispatching of most of his army through the early turns I managed to kill the dragon on the last turn after some good and focused shooting. Massacre Win (20-0).

Game 2: Game 5: vs Chaos Warriors – Another game I thought I would be in trouble. This army was a Khorne army from hell. Two huge units of Chaos Knights lead by characters armed to the hilt. Some warhounds, hellhounds and warriors on foot to fill things out and I knew I had my hands full. The main advantage I had was my speed and the fact my opponents best units were frenzied. This was perhaps one of the best tactical performances I put forward. Most Chaos generals these days remove the disadvantage of frenzy by screening all their units with Chaos Hounds until they want to unleash death and destruction on their foes. I simply



There is a WHOLE lot of pain in this unit!

Game 4: vs High Elves – Looks like I was to tangle with my hated kin yet again. I had seen Hadley (the High Elf general) a few times at various tournaments and expected a much tougher game this time. He had a large unit of Dragon Princes and a few units of Silver Helms. The battle was close all the way and very tactical with many thrusts and parries and the magical dual (both had 2 level 2 mages) was great. Defining moment was getting a bit of luck in a crucial battle with his Dragon Prince unit; once they were broken I could sail home for a good win. Minor Win (13-7).



Brad Peel's converted Chaos general.

Game 5: vs Chaos Warriors (Undivided) – This was a clash I was looking forward to. Brad Peel was the general and a very good Warhammer buddy of mine. He had an “all sorts” Chaos force with a giant, a beast herd, heaps of hounds, marauders and a few chaos sorcerers riding chaos chariots. Very fast, hard and nasty and I knew this game would make or break me in the tournament. Both Brad and I were travelling well and were looking forward to locking horns once again. The battle lived up to all expectations with some early fortune seeing me get the upper hand and hold on until the end. Two great turns of shooting resulted in a dead giant! I had an opportunity to charge his beast herd on turn 1, and I did so with a unit of dark riders and the game, the dust settled for a draw. The noble/dark pegasus combination is something I can not speak highly enough of, and charging in support of another unit with him more often than not tilted crucial clashes into my favour. Draw (10-10).

Game 6: vs Dwarfs – This guy had the hardest Dwarf army imaginable. Two bolt throwers, Organ Gun, Flame Cannon, 2 Cannons, 1 Stone Thrower and the rest were basically Thunderers and Crossbowmen. Too much shooting and with a huge hill on his side of the board I had no answer. Contemplated hiding behind a forest and playing for a draw but wanted to give it a go. I got massacred! Dark Elves are extremely vulnerable against shooting, with every loss keenly felt. Any time unit got close to his line it was blown away. A very uninspiring game against a very uninspiring army, but I guess variety is what makes Warhammer such a great game, so I just took the loss and moved on to my next opponent. Massacre Loss. (0-20)

Game 7: vs Empire – Another experienced general with a very balanced Empire army. Some nasty war machines and a fair bit of shooting. Shooting armies are normally a bad match up for Dark Elves, being fragile and having very little armour protection normally means there is nothing left when you finally



hit the opponents line. My opponent was cautious throughout the game and I was the same. There was a standoff between the Manticore and his general's unit and things never really escalated with neither general willing to commit and risk a blow out. I learned from my last game that just because your opponent is playing a “shooty” army does not mean that you have to rush headlong into his line under a hail of bow fire. I just played smart and got the points I could. Ended in a mutually beneficial draw (10-10).

Game 8: vs Dwarfs. The last game of the tournament and even though I knew I had travelled well and had exceeded all my pre-tournament expectations I did not honestly think I was a chance of winning the tournament. I am pitted against a very well painted and balanced Dwarf army (with the Anvil of Doom!) owned by Phil Cotteril. This is the game where the Dark Elves performed very well indeed. My opponent had a full unit of 20 rangers with full command coming out of a forest to my right flank. I manoeuvred my Witch Elves to face them and he takes the bait forcing me to charge (frenzy). I was very confident the girls would win this, they are perhaps one of the most underestimated units in the game but the way I deploy them (7 model frontage, witchbrew, warbanner) I thought the lightly

armoured dwarf Rangers would struggle and struggle they did. The girls defeated the rangers 3 turns in a row and finally managed to break and run the stunties down. I also judiciously used my Dark Riders to protect my bolt throwers from a Miner unit tunnelling behind my lines. Dwarfs were the first WHFB army I ever owned (and still own) so I knew all their tricks and weaknesses. This stood me in good stead for this battle and I managed to secure a minor victory. (13-7)



One of the most devastating infantry units in the game, the “beautiful” witch elves.

So overall I was extremely pleased with the Dark Elves’ performances throughout the tournament (93/160 battle points). Four wins, two draws and two losses were remarkable and I really came to appreciate the precise but fragile elements of the Dark Elves. When on song and played to their strengths they are a fantastic army to use in Warhammer Fantasy battles. This was to be the last tournament before the much talked about army book revision came into play so I was looking forward to seeing if there would be a shift in the success of Dark Elves at tournaments. I had always planned to rest the army after MOAB and move onto my next challenge which was to put together a Chaos Beastmen army containing only units that appear in the Beasts of Chaos army book.

Army Comments

- The Witch Elf and Blackguard units were both very effective and played important roles at crucial stages in many battles.
- Two Bolt Throwers are a must in Dark Elf armies in my opinion. They just provide some great firepower against all sorts of troops and adversaries.
- Characters are crucial to the Druchii, more so than any other army I have fielded before. You need magic defense because even a simple fireball can cause you a lot of pain with the small number of troops and low armour saves. You need magical attack to reduce an opponent’s units before you get into H-T-H with them. Along with the sorceress having a fast moving Noble or 2 is great for helping out your units when help is needed. My Highborn on the Manticore and Noble in Dark Pegasus were the true heroes of my MOAB success.
- I am still undecided on the repeater crossbows on the Dark Rider units. I have heard people swear both for them and against them. Personally, I still prefer taking the crossbows. It does make the units a lot more expensive but it lets them serve all manner of roles and concentrated firepower from Dark Rider units can cause a lot of damage to units that will carve you up if the Dark Riders were to simply charge in.

Where to from Here?

After any tournament I compete in I always take the time to assess how my army performed. What I would change, what I could have done better tactically and what worked well. I can recommend this “report card” approach to all aspiring tournament generals, regardless of your experience. It really helps you hone your army creation skills and prepares you better for future forays into Warhammer tournaments.

So what would I have changed? Well to tell you the truth, not a real lot! As you know from my two articles on Dark Elves I spent a lot of time play testing different elements of my army to come up with



The Noble on a Dark Pegasus is a great unit.

a good balanced and strong force. So I would probably not change anything to my current army list but would more than likely build the army from scratch if I were to field them again.

The new rules changes offer some new opportunities and in my opinion the Cauldron of Blood has suddenly become a more than viable option for a tournament Dark Elf army. Two units of witch elves, a unit of Cold One knights and two Cold One chariots would be my starting point. A few units of Dark Riders and a few units of Crossbowmen for core,

the cauldron and 2 Reaper Bolt Throwers. That would provide a good basis to tweak with and I look forward to re-visiting the land of the Druchii some time in the future to give this list a try. There is also talk regarding a Slaneesh style Dark Elf army list from the new Hordes of Chaos accessory slated for a 2004 release. A few new magical items and the ability to field Steeds of Slaneesh cavalry will add another dimension to the army.

I hope you have enjoyed my foray into the Dark Elves, I certainly have. I look forward to penning my thoughts on the Beastmen in the coming months.

The Australasian Tournament Ranking System

By David Capon and Geoff Teweirik

Since the previous issue of Irresistible Force, there have been a number of tournaments held and results added to the system. Some tournament results are unavailable in raw score form, but instead were made available in rankings form. Players who had attended events in which the results were only available in rankings were a little miffed that we couldn't include their results in the system, especially those that had won an event, hey Andrew ;) So this required a change to the way the system calculates the rankings which involves all kind of wonderful things like means and standard deviations. Needless to say, after a little bit of work it all came together and these are the results which you can see on the website at <http://users.tpg.com.au/gandnt>

Warhammer Fantasy Tournaments are played all around the world. This tournament ranking system deals specifically with the area of Australia and New Zealand (other Australasian results welcome!). Everyone competes in these events for their own reasons, be it for fun or to win either the event or a criteria category. The scoring systems used at tournaments are all relatively similar, players score points when they achieve something which adds up to determine the winners. It's the availability of these results which allows this system to

work. While the ranking system requires the raw scores to input into the system, they are not made available at any stage, nor can the system be accurately reverse engineered to determine raw scores. We respect Tournament Organisers right to not publish results.

For those of you who are interested in the system we have put together the following answers to common questions we have fielded since the last rankings were released. It gets a bit heavy, so be warned.

Important:

The key thing to remember



about these rankings is that this is a seeding system and is not a measure of capability. Top seeded tennis players get defeated by lower seeded players all the time. It's a list of what player do get, not what they should get.

The Start:

Raw scores. They are a necessary evil for this system to work. The more we have the better. Rankings don't provide a degree of separation between players. 1st place might be miles ahead of the competition, but that won't get recognised in pure rankings.

So, taking the raw scores we compile some stats & factors. Average (mean) and standard deviation are calculated for number of players, number of games, and each category's maximum score (ie Battle, Sports, Comp, Painting, Overall). This creates a "base" number from which to work from... the "ideal tournament" if you like.

Next we determine the normalisation factors for each category for every event. This allows us to equalise all tournament scored regardless of the actual points used. Divide the Avg for the category by the actual for the event. This means your score will be bumped up or down depending on how much the event deviates from the average.

Next we determine the Events "Weighting Factor". This is a simple analysis of how much the event deviates from the average event purely on attendance. Again, as with the previous system it's assumed the more people, the more competition, therefore the harder it is to rank higher and so the more weight the event deserves. To prevent

minor differences in attendance overly affecting the results, anything within 1 standard deviation is ranked the same... a factor of 1. If it's between 1-2 std dev's then it's a factor of +/- 25%, greater than 2 standard deviations +/- 50%. So, Dogcon2 scores... way out there at 82 people... are worth 150% of the average event (39 players at time of writing).



Yeah I am confused too! – Ed

So how is your score worked out?

Well, we take the raw score for the category, normalise it, then weight it... The formula is then (Category Raw * Normalise factor) * Weight.

That's your score for that event. We then only consider the top 3 scores, so all your results are compiled, the top 3 determined, added together to produce that final score. The number is pretty much meaningless except for determining ranking, and helping to show that "degree of separation" between players at a ranking level. If you've followed us by now you can probably tell it's damned near impossible to reverse engineer these scores to find out your actual scores for events that haven't published them. That's if we even got them.

But what if you don't have raw scores?

Well, glad you asked ;) If we only have ranks, how can we determine a score? We've already said Ranks lack that degree of separation right? Well, for each event we calculate the percentage of maximum score each rank obtained. These are then compiled for every event, and the average percentage of maximum score is calculated per rank. In effect, we artificially create a degree of separation based on averages of other events. We then apply this percentage to the rank obtained at the event where no raw score is provided. So, if you qualified 20th, and that's "on average" 50% of the maximum score, that's what you'll get, a half of the maximum score. This only works of course if the total points of the event are also known. It's accurate to around +/- 10%, and it's better than nothing.

How do you guys work all this out?!

All of the above is (thankfully) managed by a complex spreadsheet (12 sheets just to compile results!) so as events are added, averages and deviations change. For example, the +1 Std Deviation figure for number of players is 55.71 at the time of writing. Fields of Blood the New Zealand Grand Tournament had 60 players. As I write it's just scraping into the +25% bracket. Over the course of adding in new events it's bounced in & out of the 100% - 125% bracket. This also means that player's scores are dynamic. You can change ranking position without having attended any further events just by the addition of a new event. It's possible you could even go up in rankings as more players are added. There are currently

372 different players from across the region that have played in tournaments so far this year.

Is this system right? Is it accurate?

Well... maybe... it's one system of many that could be used, but this one revolves around averages & deviations from that average. Tournament weighting is completely independent of what anyone "thinks" an event should be, and purely on where it sits in the statistical distribution. It may even change as new events get added in.

Why include the scores of those who have attended less than 3 events? Surely this skews the rankings?

Well, mostly because, as it's for fun, everyone (who reads the list) is interested in where they sit. If they don't even rate a

mention because they haven't attended 3 events, then it'll get brushed off and never looked at again. On the other hand, if you find you rank, to your own surprise, 300th out of 372 players, then you may be encouraged to attend a second event to see how that improves your ranking.

The number of people who attend 3 events stops at around 51 (of 372), two events peters out around 132. So, if it were only to include 3 event people, we'd only be picking up 13% of the people who *might* be interested. The average number of events attended is 1.5

Why am I listed as having only attended 2 events, when I've actually been to 3?

Due to the nature of this system we rely on Tournament Organisers or the players to send in the results of events.

We do our best to track them down, but sometimes it's just nigh on impossible to get hold of them. So if you are missing an event then it's not going to be in this list of events which are in the system:

Dogcon2, Brisbane GT, Sydney GT, Spawn, Pizzacon IX, WAU, Conflict Perth, Outpost 6030 RTT, Crows Feast, Battle in the Vines, Melbourne GT, Call to Arms, Fields of Blood New Zealand GT, MOAB, Axemaster, Ork-toberfest.

If you can get hold of the results for an event that isn't in the system, please send it in to geoff_tewierik@hotmail.com and we will add it in.

Until Next Time...

Phew! Issue 4 was a long time in the coming, but I hope you agree it was worth it. I certainly gain a lot of satisfaction out of putting the e-zine together and am looking forward to Issue #5 already.

Speaking of which, issue 5 will have a special on the Skaven with a feature article and an appearance in a Battle Report. There will also be a look at the new Bretonians and I will be starting a series of articles on my Beastmen. There will also be an extensive look (over a few issues) of a new campaign the Greyhawk Warhammer club is launching into this month. That promises to be a lot of fun.

What else will we be publishing next issue? Well that is up to YOU! So get to it and get those articles written and sent them in!

Please consider donating something to the cause to keep the e-zine afloat, see the web site (<http://www.irresistibleforce.net>) for more information.

If you have any suggestions, constructive criticisms or ideas, send them through to editor@irresistibleforce.net.

Until next time, take care and happy gaming!

Cheers,
Andrew Galea