

BACKGROUND



THE ORIGINS OF BLOOD BOWL

It all began long, long ago, on an ancient battlefield somewhere in the known world. The battle ended in a grim bloodbath, and both sides slumped beneath the circling vultures on the reeking, gore-soaked battlefield, fickle Madame Victory remaining firmly out of reach of everybody. Mutual exhaustion led to a truce being called, whereupon the leaders of both sides attempted to parley.

As the leaders argued, the ordinary troops fell where they stood, thankful for any respite from the slaughter. Mungk, the leader of a small Orcish band, was sitting with his first sergeant, indulging in his favourite sport of bogey-flicking. Having won this absorbing competition with a deft over-under move, Mungk waved his scrawny companion away. The Orc leant back, wondering when this parley nonsense would be over so he could get back to the fun of wholesale slaughter. He gazed out over the battlefield, grinning with fond recollection at the piles of Dwarf corpses. Their last stand had taken place in a bowl-shaped depression. At the southern end of this stood a strange silver dome, undoubtedly another of the many ancient constructions left from a previous, more peaceful time. It was against this dome that Mungk now rested his head.



Bored with simply sucking his teeth and motivated by a thunderous rumbling in his belly, the Orc began scrabbling in the sodden earth in the hope of finding a juicy earthworm or two on which to snack. His battle-blunted claws hit something hard and smooth. He pulled, but to no avail. He scrabbled: nothing happened. Then he pushed. Something went in, something else clicked, and finally something was the side of the ancient building, which slid upwards to let stale, dry air pour from the dark interior.

Mungk, who would have been in serious trouble with the washerwoman had he been wearing any form of underwear, gazed goggle-eyed into the glittering hall now revealed inside the dome. Strange armour adorned the walls, peculiar mosaics lined the floor, and at its centre, on a great bejewelled pedestal, sat an enormous book...

After the parleying leaders of the two great armies had been informed of the Orc's peculiar discovery, they adjourned their so-far-fruitless meeting in favour of this new mystery. Since none of

the generals could actually read, however, they were unable to establish much beyond the fact that the building was obviously an ancient temple. Messengers were dispatched with utmost speed in an effort to find some literate being who could reveal the secrets the dome held. Eventually, a half-blind Dwarf was led up and introduced as an expert in all languages, both current and arcane. The book thrust before his warty nose, the Dwarf sat cross-legged on the floor and began poring through its forgotten secrets.

Three days passed, during which time the Dwarf hardly moved from his chosen spot. At last, he was ready to make his report. A podium was hastily erected before the silver temple, and the stunted fellow hoisted up onto it to deliver his findings to the assembled multitude.

"This book," wheezed the ancient seer, blinking his heavy-lidded eyes, "appears to be the religious text of a group of warriors who came from a land called *Amorica*. The book is dedicated to the lost god *Nuffle*. The head priests of the various sects of this deity, known as *coaches*, led their bands of warriors into great arenas, and attempted to exterminate each other. The object was not, however, violence simply for violence's sake. No! It was in truth of great ritual significance!"

There was a subdued murmur from the crowd as they attempted to absorb this outlandish concept. The Dwarf continued: "A pig's bladder was inflated and carried or thrown from one end of the arena to the other, in an effort to, erm, *score*. Carrying the bladder over an opponent's end line gave a sect a number of things called *points*. The battle lasted a set time. At the end, the sect who had amassed the most points was declared the victor. Apparently, you didn't even have to maim all your opponents, although the coaches seem to have encouraged the practice as much as they could. Furthermore, the book also states that *Nuffle's* sacred number was eleven, and that only eleven warriors from each side could be on the field of battle at one time."

At this there was a great deal of shuffling in the goblinoid ranks as they removed their footwear in a desperate attempt to find out just what the number 'eleven' was. Typically, this degenerated into brawling after a Goblin discovered what a great joke it was to keep his boots on and stamp on all his mates' bare feet with his hobnails. Ignoring the infrequent howls of pain, the Dwarf continued.

"This does not mean that there were only eleven members of a sect, or *team*, as they were also known. Warriors could go off and come on at will, as long as the sacred number was not exceeded. One could also hit an opponent at any time, as long as one did not use a weapon! *Nuffle* said that one's body was one's weapon, and – although he allowed amour – all weapons are forbidden from the arena. It is also written that the arena for this conflict was a rectangular field, set within a huge bowl!"

All eyes turned to regard the shape of the battlefield in which they had gathered, where large squadrons of over-stuffed vultures were making feeble attempts to get airborne again.

★ ★ STAR PLAYER PROFILE ★ ★

MORG 'N' THORG

Former Star Player of Chaos All-Stars

For all their bizarre magic and weird rites, the Chaos All-Stars are very popular with the Blood Bowl-watching public. This popularity is due, at least in part, to the success of their hulk-like big guys such as Ogre blocker, Morg 'n' Thorg. While we think his name is written that way, Morg is unable to actually write his name (using only a bloody fist print on most contracts). As a result each Blood Bowl record book spells Morg's name based on how it sounds when Morg says his name and interviewing him is often a risk filled event. Thus Morg's name has been spelled over a half dozen ways in the Blood Bowl record books. Morg or 'The Ballista' as tongue-tied commentators have nicknamed him, is a huge, lumbering juggernaut of a player. With his half-shaven head and grim, tusky visage he looks very frightening, but off the pitch he's as gentle as a lamb and a great hit with children. As a result of his award-winning series of road safety adverts, accidents have been cut by more than a quarter, and he's sold more soft toilet paper than anyone in history!



On the Blood Bowl pitch, though, Morg is the accident; at least, he always leaves the objects of his tackles looking like they've been in a road smash! His play tactics are effective in their simplicity - either he bludgeons his way through the opposition and scores, trampling everyone in his way; or he gives the ball to one of his Goblin teammates and throws them into the end zone to score!

Club historians still aren't quite sure where Morg came from; legend has always had it that he simply walked into a practice session one day and signed himself up. Wherever he came from, he was a natural Chaos All-Stars player, being both calculating and cruel, and blessed with a brutal-looking exterior. He's always been very shy of revealing details of his personal history to sports reporters, and has been known to demonstrate his shyness to the more irritating of them. Incidentally, by using only a pencil sharpener, three carrots and a small desk lamp, Morg persuaded Nikk Three-horn to make him the only player in the history of the game to be elected to the Hall of Fame before he had retired from the game.

After helping the Chaos All-Stars win the Chaos Cup for the third time in a row in 2497, Morg was approached by Goblin agent, Gimmy the Geek, with an offer to turn to the lucrative world of freelance playing. Morg almost bit Gimmy's head off rather than talk to him until Gimmy showed Morg that he had five teams already willing to offer him almost half a million gold pieces to play for just one game! Morg began offering his services to ANY team that will pay his enormous fee (although an incident with Coach Tomolandry means he no longer works for teams that use necromantic magic.) Between his advertising contracts and his freelancing fees, Morg has become the richest player still playing Blood Bowl and his piles of gold keep growing.

Height: 7 ft 11 in **Weight:** 390 lbs

Position: Blocker; former Team Captain

Career Totals: 50 passing touchdowns, 50 rushing touchdowns, 617 kills/serious injuries inflicted

Awards: 46 Most Valuable Player Awards. Services to Organ Transplants Medal 2479, 2491. Anti-violence Watchdog Committee Worst Tackle of the Year 2479, 2480, 2485, 2486, 2491. NFC Player of the Year 2485. Chaos Cup winners medal 2471, 2487, 2493

Spike! Magazine Star Player Rating: 692 points

"It seems to me," continued the Dwarf in a loud voice to regain their attention, "that Nuffle has seen our dilemma and is trying to resolve it. I suggest that a team is put forward from each side, and that our differences be resolved in this fashion." A murmur of assent rippled through the crowd, soon rising to a roar of agreement; except, that is, for the corner in which the Goblins were standing, since they were all still exploring the intriguing new possibilities of foot-stomping!

And so it was that the first game of Nuffle Amorical Football, as it soon became known, took place. A pig's bladder was inflated, much to the pig's consternation we must add. Armour was taken from the temple, and placed on chosen warriors from either side. The teams lined up, a shaman 'referee', dressed in fresh zebra skin for the occasion, blew a whistle and the game was away.

There was no proper pitch, no lines and very few rules, and to this day no-one is quite sure who actually won. There was a suitably large amount of carnage, however, and everyone agreed that they had really enjoyed themselves. The battle was forgotten, and the various sides dispersed to carry the exciting news to their homelands, where every tribe quickly rushed to field a team.

It was while those who remained swept up the mess that they discovered a strange green surface just under the bloody mud of the battlefield, a surface engraved with peculiar symbols and lines. The field was scrubbed clean. The workers were hushed, aware of the significance of their find. At last, the sacred Gridiron spoken of in the Book was revealed. The Dwarf seer, who had adopted the name of Sacred Commissioner Roze-El, after a priest of high standing mentioned in the Book, offered a prayer to Nuffle and began to organise the first sect meeting. His mind burned with plans for the future, plans that would culminate in the toughest sects meeting in a physical offering to the great god – the Blood Bowl!

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

During his time as Sacred Commissioner, Roze-El made many great strides in recreating Nuffle's original rites. In the darker recesses of the temple, piles of remarkably well-preserved pamphlets and scrolls were found, giving further details of the ancient game's rituals. A team of seers and scribes was set to work translating and retranslating these, until a vast body of knowledge was assembled about the game. These quickly helped clarify the rules of the game. Soon, games were being played with set time limits and on properly-marked pitches. By the time of Roze-El's death, at the grand old age of 196, there were sixteen teams competing in a season which culminated in the glorious excesses of the Blood Bowl final.

There were initially some problems, as teams from the Auld World and the New World areas developed their own unique rules of play, and a match between the Dwarf Giants and the Reikland Reavers in 2399 almost started a full-scale war when neither side could decide whose rules to use. Eventually, though, NAF resolved the situation, and a set of rules for everyone to use was published in 2409. The twin conferences were ratified in 2432, with the winner from the New World Football Conference (NFC) meeting that from the Auld World Football Conference (AFC) in the final for the Blood Bowl trophy. The arrival of Bloodweiser Beer as sponsors of the Blood Bowl cup in 2461 was the final transformation which made the competition into what it is today.

Roze-El was succeeded by his acolyte and apprentice Djimm Thorp, and then by the infamous Jorge Hellhound. Hellhound is known for many things, but his most important innovation came when he realised that he could sell far more tickets for games than he could ever hope to pack spectators into any stadium in the New World. And so he contacted the various Colleges of Magic, asking them to find a way to transmit an image of the game all over the continent.

The result was the invention of a device, named after the Campaign for Real Arcanery – the Camra. A bound spirit in a box was allowed to look out in one direction only, at the Blood Bowl pitch, and his mental image could then be transmitted by teams of magicians using the spell Cabalvision. Anyone could buy a licence to have these thoughts transmitted into their own minds. The idea was a huge success. When Hellhound sold the franchise to Channel 7 for the princely sum of 714 gold crowns, it was just the beginning. Rival Guilds set up counter-bids. The Necromancer's Broadcasting Circle (NBC) coverage began with Blood Bowl X, but they are normally thought to be dead boring. The Crystal Ball Service (CBS) have been more successful. The Association of Broadcasting Conjurors (ABC) won the franchise when it was renewed for the thirtieth time in 2486 (incidentally, the sum had risen to a staggering 12 million!)

THE COLLAPSE OF THE NAF

By the late 80's the original sacred site discovered by Mungk was the ultimate shrine for all followers of Blood Bowl. The NAF moved its headquarters to a prestigious new complex next to the site, and two years later built the Blood Bowl Museum and Hall of Fame nearby. This remarkable building had a permanent exhibition detailing the history of the game and the careers of many of its most brilliant past players.

The NAF league was carefully organised and run. There were twenty Blood Bowl teams, divided into divisions of five teams each and all competing for the Blood Bowl championship. The two conferences were supported by a huge array of lesser teams from all nations and races, with their own national and local leagues, inter-guild championships and so on. From his office at the NAF headquarters, the NAF commissioner Nikk Three-horn governed every aspect of the game, from the tops of the highest mountains to deep below the surface of the earth.

And then disaster struck! The '88-'89 season was incredibly successful, and huge amounts of cash poured into the NAF headquarters. Unfortunately the temptation proved just too much for Nikk Three-horn. While the 2489 Blood Bowl final between the Darkside Cowboys and the Reikland Reavers was taking place, Nikk, the entire NAF treasury and most of the Darkside Cowboys cheerleader squad vanished and were never seen again! What became of Nikk no-one knows, although rumours persist of a secret fortress hidden deep in the Worlds Edge Mountains, and of the outrageous and perverted goings on there...

The NAF, meanwhile, was thrown into turmoil. For the remainder of 2489 it was run by a rapid succession of corrupt or plain incompetent officials, who only succeeded in making matters worse. The start of the '89-'90 season was a fiasco, and before the year was out the entire NAF organisation was declared bankrupt and went into receivership.

★ ★ STAR PLAYER PROFILE ★ ★ GRIFF OBERWALD

Former Star Player of Reikland Reavers

It isn't often that head coach of the Reikland Reavers, Harry Zwimmer, has a nice word to say about any other human being, but it is recorded that when he first saw the young Griff Oberwald play, he actually declared: "Zat boy is almost above average!". Such immense praise from the tight-lipped coach was only the first in a great many compliments paid to the young superstar from Streissen, who has since been called "Griff the godlike!" (Spike! Magazine), "Phew what a scorer!" (Middenheim Mirror) and



"The greatest gift to our profession since Morg 'n' Thorg first bit a Goblin's head off in the Chaos Cup!" (Undertaker's Gazette).

The young Oberwald came to the attention of Reavers fans in his first game for the team at the end of 2483, in which his ferocious tackle play garnered him three ears, a nose and a two-match suspension. Undaunted by this minor set-back, Griff gained a permanent place in the Reavers first team, where he battled his way through the lines alongside his half-cousin and team captain Orlak Sturmdrang. A quite remarkable second season for the Reavers earned him a precious Best Newcomer medal, and culminated in his scoring the winning touchdown against the Darkside Cowboys in the full-scale rout that was Blood Bowl XXV.

Oberwald's qualities are those of the classic Blood Bowl hero. He's tall, super fit and strong, with a grace and co-ordination that can leave most other players standing. Instantly recognisable across a murky Blood Bowl pitch by the splattering of gore across his kit, Oberwald cuts a very dashing figure and it's no surprise the girls go wild when he has the ball in his capable hands.

Oberwald became team captain at the start of the '87 season and immediately made his mark on the team, driving them harder than ever with startling results. Reikland finished the year as Blood Bowl champions yet again, and Oberwald was voted AFC Player of the Year. Going from strength to strength, Griff becomes one of the most respected (and feared!) Blood Bowl player in the Old World.

After winning his fourth Blood Bowl winners medal in 2499, Griff realized that the rigors of playing full time for the Reavers was becoming too much for him. Griff's living larger than life had taken a half step of speed from his game (while donating some to his waistline). Griff turned freelance starting with the 2500 season with a single match fee that rivals the gold need to provide the cost of food and ale for the most sought out freelance star monstrosities (like the minotaur Grashnak and snow troll Icepelt). However there is little doubt that teams (including the Reavers) will be lining up to hire the special services of one of the most dangerous humans to ever take the Blood Bowl pitch.

Height: 6 ft 4 in **Weight:** 183 lbs

Position: Blitzter; former Team Captain

Career Totals: 107 catching touchdowns, 209 rushing touchdowns, 93 kills/serious injuries inflicted; 8 interceptions

Awards: 11 Most Valuable Player Awards. Bloodweiser Best Newcomer medal 2484. AFC Player of the Year 2487. Blood Bowl winners medal 2485, 2487, 2491, 2499

Spike! Magazine Star Player Rating: 401 points

CHAOS & CONFUSION

Following the collapse of the NAF, Blood Bowl teams were thrown back on their own resources. Unfortunately most teams were run by coaches not noted for their financial ability, and so not surprisingly many rapidly went bankrupt and had to be disbanded. Almost half the teams in the old NFC and AFC conferences went under, including such famous names as: the Asgard Ravens (who were forced to take up raiding and pillaging to supplement their income and were wiped out at the Battle of Stamford Bridge), Albion Wanderers (who gave up Blood Bowl and set up their own version of football that involves kicking the ball instead of carrying it), the Westside Werewolves (who got lost in the forests of Athelorn and found themselves barking up the wrong tree), and the Southstorm Squids (who were washed away when their ship capsized on a fundraising trip to Estalia).

Almost all of the other teams were forced to sell their stadiums and take to the open road, travelling from town to town and playing matches against any opponent, any place, any time, and for any money they could get! At the end of what had been the regular season nearly all the surviving teams were still strapped for cash, so rather than rest up over the summer they simply kept on playing through the year.

Meanwhile the Cabalvision networks were desperate to increase the falling rating figures for the game. For the first time in the history of the game there had been no Blood Bowl championship, and without the excitement of semi-finals and large championships, Cabalvision viewing figures were well down on what they had been before. In order to try to overcome this trend, the NBC joined forces with Orcidas and hosted the first 'Chaos Cup Open Tournament'.

THE OPEN TOURNAMENTS

As its name implies, the Chaos Cup Open was open to all teams. The first three weeks of the tournament were an anarchic and confusing affair called the play-offs. During the play-offs it was up to the teams taking part in the tournament to arrange matches for themselves, there was no regular schedule as such. A team could play any number of matches in this period, against any opponent (although they couldn't play the same opponent more than once). Teams scored points for winning matches, and at the end of the play-off period the four teams with the most points went through to the semi-finals.

The winners of the semi-final matches went through to the Grand Final for the Chaos Cup trophy and (more importantly) a big money cash prize. The event proved a huge success. The play-offs, which had been organised because neither Orcidas or NBC could be sure which teams would turn up and so couldn't organise a regular schedule even if they had wanted to, proved surprisingly popular. The wild and woolly play-off period generated a huge number of games and an enormous amount of excitement. NBC's viewing figures went through the roof, and the audience for the final between the Marauders (who had shortened their name from the Middenheim Marauders after they were forced to sell their stadium) and the Dwarf Giants, rivalled that of the '89 Blood Bowl Championship.

Having enviously watched the success of the Chaos Open, the ABC joined forces with Bloodweiser to host the '91 Blood Bowl championships using the new 'open' format. The Blood Bowl Open proved every bit as popular as the Chaos Cup Open, and soon networks and sponsors were falling over themselves to set

up their own open tournaments. Four tournaments quickly established themselves as the most important and eagerly anticipated Blood Bowl events of the year, and were soon being referred to as 'the Major Tournaments' or simply 'the Majors'.

BLOOD BOWL TODAY

Blood Bowl by the year 2493 is very different to the highly structured and organised game that was run by the NAF until 2488. Now Blood Bowl teams travel freely round the Old World, moving from venue to venue to play games. In a way, Blood Bowl teams are now much more like a travelling company of actors, or a mercenary regiment (or a combination of the two!), than the Blood bowl teams of the NAF period. Teams are accompanied by a large gathering of retainers, showmen, hangers-on, assorted ne'er-do-wells, loyal fans and dedicated supporters. The arrival of two teams to play a match brings with it a carnival atmosphere, and is eagerly looked forward to by the local population.

The stadiums where the games are played are usually owned by the town or the city where the stadium is built, more often than not bought on the cheap from an impoverished team following the collapse of '88. It is very rare for a Blood Bowl team to own their own stadium these days, although not completely unheard of (the Lowdown Rats still own their own stadium, though this owes more to the refusal of anyone to buy the mouldering death-trap than any desire of the Rats to hang on to the place). Blood Bowl teams are usually paid by the owner of the stadium to play there, the amount of money they receive depending on the number of fans who turn up to watch the match, whether or not the match will be shown by a Cabalvision network, and whether the team wins or loses.

And then, of course, there are the tournaments. The major tournaments are held in large cities and attract dozens of teams, and hundreds of thousands of followers and fans. Most of the big teams will play at all four major tournaments and carefully plan their travel route so that they arrive at the tournament venue well in advance to become acclimatised.

THE LOWDOWN RATS PLAYBOOK

Wen weez got da ball:

Wun - Pick it up.
 Too - Stop fitein' each uvver - jus' wun of yers pick it up!
 A few - Effribody run towards da uvver team.
 Too on boaf 'ands - 'It 'em.
 Boaf 'ands, boaf feet an' yer noze - Keep 'ittin' 'em.
 Lotz - If da Ref' blowz 'iz whistle, 'it 'im.
 Lotz 'n' lotz - If dere'z no-wun to 'it, see if yooz got da ball.
 Too zoggin' many - If yooz got it, get wun of dem tuchdurn fings.

Reese... risv... getting' da ball wend a uvvers 'as gotted it:

Wun - Effribody run towardz da uvver team.
 Too - 'It 'em.
 A few - Keeps 'ittin' 'em.
 A few an' 'unnuver wun - If da Ref' blowz 'iz whistle, 'it 'im.
 Lotz - If dere's no-wun to 'it, chekk to see if yooz got da ball.
 Lotz 'n' lotz - If yooz got it, score wun of dem tuchdurn fings.

Special Playz:

Crump dere frowerz,
 Fump dere kacherz,
 Keep clear of geezerz in lotza armour,
 Kill dem zoggin' noisy 'oomans in da crowd an' nick all dere stuff.

The major tournaments are watched by countless numbers of Humans, Orcs, Elves, Ogres, Dwarfs, Trolls, Goblins, Halflings and many more esoteric viewers besides. Just how many watch and play the game is difficult to determine, because it is so widespread. Rumours persist that the game has permeated the lower levels of the astral and daemonic planes and hopes are still high that in a few years we shall witness exchange teams of daemons and elementals joining all the regulars in the Blood Bowl! As the long departed Commissioner Three-horn famously said on many occasions: "This is Blood Bowl, buddy, anything could happen!". You better believe it!

In fact, anything DID happen because in 2502 due to the continual need to monitor and organize the majors and play-offs, the NAF was reformed with president Jonathan 'Kripler' Louis III to overlook and calculate the rankings for the tournaments (though some sceptics claim the NAF simply pull a number out from... somewhere...). With a procedure in place for popular election of future NAF presidents, and no actual handling of the multi-millions that was the sponsorship money, tournament prizes and CabalVision revenue, the chance of corruption was greatly reduced. These days the NAF also offer banking services for the travelling teams (since lugging gold crowns through the Badlands can be more hazardous to the team's health than the game). Many teams take advantage of this service of the NAF to lessen the risk to the team and trouble with the hauling the weight of that much gold.

★ ★ ★ *Did you know...*

Spike! Magazine number 3 All-time Most Violent Player Award is currently held by Max 'Kneecap' Mittleman. Although a referee rather than a player, Max was always a big hit with the fans for his refusal to follow the NAF referee's guidelines. Instead Kneecap dispensed summary justice with the aid of a pair of pliers, a branding iron and a chainsaw. Kneecap was sacked after three games, but the NAF was forced to reinstate him due to 'pressure from the fans'. His record for the Most Players Dismembered by a Referee stand to this day.



THE GAME ITSELF

Despite the appalling chaos that seems to reign whenever the whistle blows, there are a great many rules in the game of Blood Bowl. You may not be surprised to hear that many of them are forgotten most or all of the time. The Heroes of Law are renowned for being so goody-goody that they play to all the rules; as a consequence, of course, they are almost always beaten by their opponents, and are terribly boring to watch too! However, here are some of the basic principles of the sport; if you wish to know more we recommend you look at Mutilate & Slaughter's exhaustive handbook on the subject 'Genocide the Blood Bowl Way'.

THE PLAYING PITCH

In honour of the very first Blood Bowl site, every pitch must measure 100 by 60 Human paces, with a further five paces of End Zone at each end. The pitch is then usually divided by lines across it every five paces. Blood Bowl games are traditionally played on grass as it is written in the Holy Book of Nuffle that grass is the sacred material of Blood Bowl. Some subterranean

teams like the Dark Elves and Dwarfs have tried using synthetic substance called Astrogranite instead since it does not need sunlight or maintenance. Traditional above ground teams have refused to use Astrogranite though especially since disgraced NAF head Nikk Three-horn owned the original factory that made it.

THE GAME IN ACTION

As the ancient tome found by Mungk revealed, the object of Nuffle's game is to carry the ball into the opposing team's End Zone, while they try to stop you. The team that manages to do this the most times during the match wins. That sounds simple enough, doesn't it? If that were true, though, games would be a lot less fun than they plainly are. So why is the average game of Blood Bowl such a mind-mangling spectacle of fun and fear?

A typical game is preceded by a coin toss to decide which side starts with the ball. Its here that the cheating generally starts: bribed referees, double-headed and weighted coins, skilful palming and simply punching out the referee and the opposing captain have all been frequently used. A more ingenious tactic, perhaps, was that employed by the Hobgoblin team in a quarter-final several years ago: they ignored a coin toss which went against them and started play with a ball of their own. This move would be on record as possibly the only even vaguely intelligent thing the Hobgobs ever did, were they not 2-0 down after only eight minutes!

As soon as one side has the ball, it's the job of the players on the other side to take it off them. In fact it's probably this which is the real problem with the game as far as a referee is concerned, because players just can't seem to control their enthusiasm when faced with an opponent who's holding the ball. Actually, they can't control it when faced with another player. Period! Which brings us to the...

REFEREES

Those hard-faced, zebra-striped officials with the funny trousers and the piercing whistles are the NAF's representatives on the field of play. As such, they have a very important job to perform. It's a pity, then, that the good name of Blood Bowl referees has gone down so much in the public's estimation. Many pretend they are rat gutters or sewer sweepers rather than admit their real profession.

Fifty years ago, the average game of Blood Bowl would be officiated over by a team of seven referees and line judges. These days, you're considered extremely lucky if two turn up. The trouble is that referees seem to – erm – die rather easily. Since they don't wear padding or armour, and since they are often frail and wizened ex-players, they really don't stand a chance against players like Vurner Vinkler. Vinkler, nicknamed the Refkiller, made a habit of celebrating each touchdown by flattening a referee, until he was lynched after a particularly successful game by eighty members of the Referees and Allied Rulekeepers Guild (RARG).

★ ★ ★ *Did you know...*

According to the rules of the original game, a match started with the ball being tossed up between the teams by a hapless referee. The upshot of this was usually a dead referee, of course, so the practice was stopped and a kick-off used instead. Now at least, the referee can stay out of the way and not get flattened!

THE PLAYERS

A Blood Bowl team consists of a large squad of players. However, according to the rules, only eleven players may be on the pitch at one time, in deference to Nuffle's sacred number. Unsurprisingly, this rule has not always been adhered to as closely as it might.

During the first half of the Blood Bowl final of 2476, the Severed Heads (now playing as the Orcland Raiders) managed to sneak a grand total of 27 players onto the pitch. This despicable cheating was only spotted when there weren't enough oranges to go round at half-time! When asked why they hadn't noticed it earlier, their opponents, the Creeveland Crescents, claimed they didn't notice because all Orcs looked the same to them, especially those who were battering them to the ground.

There was also something of a dispute during a famous match between the Greenfield Grasshuggers and the Underworld Creepers, when it was discovered that the Grasshuggers' new star Blitzer was in fact two Halflings in an Ogre's kit, one standing on the shoulders of the other! Still, the matter was settled when the Creepers' Troll ate both offenders, and play could continue.

Of the eleven noble warriors legally allowed on the pitch at any one time, some will be standard Linemen but others will be players that specialize in throwing, catching, running, blocking, or blitzing.

EQUIPMENT

It can cost upwards of 150,000 gold crowns to outfit a professional team for a season – and to look at the way players treat their kit you'd think the money grew on trees. However, all that padding and armour comes in very useful for keeping a player alive long enough to maybe make a few yards or to toss the ball to another player. The cost of equipment is now so high that some teams, especially those from the poorer goblinoid races, insist a player supply his own equipment from whatever he can find. Some players have become remarkably inventive at improvising Blood Bowl gear from other objects.

The very first ball, history tells us, was made from the inflated bladder of an unfortunate pig called Dennis. Sorry to say, the ball used that day has not survived to the present, but the Blood Bowl Museum does contain a lot of balls from the early days of the game. In those days a ball could be just about any shape, and made from just about any material that could stand up to the punishment of a Blood Bowl match, but still be light enough to be thrown. These days, all balls are made by the Blood Bowl Ball Company of Rock Rapids near Middenheim. Game standard professional balls cost around 30 gold crowns but teams have been experimenting with spiked balls which allow the team to circumvent the rules banning weapons from the field of play!

CHEERLEADERS

Where would we be without those beauties of the Blood Bowl battlefield, those cuddly cuties of the Chaos Cup confrontation, the cheerleaders? You know, every team gets demoralised at some time or another, but there's nothing like a happy chant from a posse of beautiful women to turn a 2-0 deficit at half-time to the Lowdown Ratz into a triumph of modern pest-control! Every team has its own cheerleading squad, from the stark Elven beauty of the Darkside Cowgirls to the roly-poly homeliness of

the Greenfield Gigglers. Even the Nurgle's Rotters have a gang of cheerleading lovelies who are probably very pretty if you happen to be a rotten body of putrescent disease like the rest of the Rotters players. Most teams have very strict rules about cheerleaders, especially where relations with players are concerned. Some teams forbid any form of contact between the stars and the cheerleaders, with infringement punishable by instant dismissal.

BEHIND THE PLAYERS

Behind every good (and bad!) Blood Bowl team there's a large team of very highly skilled professionals who handle everything except the actual playing of the game. The Reikland Reavers, for example, include the following 'backroom boys':

MANAGEMENT: At the very top there's owner and president JJ Griswell Jr. together with his staff of eleven directors, yes-men and secretaries. These follow JJ everywhere, noting down any important decisions, ideas or pearls of wisdom which may fall from his lips as he strides through the stadium sacking people. Behind this lot are a further ten financial, legal and administrative staff who handle the day-to-day running of the club.

COACHING: Helmut Zimmer has the responsibility of getting the team to peak fitness, assisted by ten further specialists and assistant coaches. The specialists each teach and train the players in one particular aspect of the game, be it throwing, catching, maiming, throttling or whatever.

HEALTH: The Reavers employ a medical team of four apothecaries and physicians, and also have a full-time counsellor and lawyer whose job it is to look after the players' well-being between matches, or in the Reavers' case, to bail them out so they can play the next day!

PUBLIC RELATIONS: This department employs eighteen people, whose various jobs include producing the programmes and club magazines, and selling tickets. They also organise the half-time entertainment and train the team of 26 cheerleaders, the Reavettes (and their two bodyguards).

Add to this number all the locker room boys, equipment cleaners, washerwomen, crowd security men, bar staff, merchandise sellers, rat-on-a-stick vendors and general hangers-on and dogsbodies, and you've got much more than just a team of sixteen battle-trained psychos.

★ ★ ★ *Did you know...*

The Hobgoblin Team is a team made up entirely of Hobgoblins (not a big surprise) without any other Chaos Dwarf players. Unfortunately, it has to make do with Hobgoblins who will *voluntarily* play Blood Bowl (rather than being forced to as they are in most Chaos Dwarf teams), and as a result it has the biggest collection of stupid and easily duped players of any team in the Old World. The chaos and confusion that reign when the Hobgoblin team stumble and trip onto the playing pitch means that games featuring them are very popular, and almost always sell out in advance. Skurfrik Stone-Sucker was prime example of "talent" on the Hobgoblin Team, Voted Spike! Magazine's All-time Worse Player no. 3, he was renowned for being the stupidest Hobgoblin player ever! Skurfrik often turned up to matches several days early - because it took him that long to figure out how to tie up his bootlaces!



THE OLD WORLD



Blood Bowl today is mostly played on a mammoth continent that is known to all as the Old World (or the Auld World for the real old timers). The Old World is a wild and dangerous place - let's face it, it has to be if the inhabitants play Blood Bowl for fun!

The land is bound to the east by the World's Edge Mountains and to the west by the Great Ocean. The northern coast lies against the Sea of Claws, on the other side of which is the frozen tundra of Norsca, home of the fierce Norse warriors, and beyond to fabled Albion. Bordering the southern edge is the foreboding Land of the Dead, with its cyclopean tomb cities of Khemri and Numas. Beyond the World's Edge Mountains are the Dark Lands, home to the evil and twisted Chaos Dwarfs, whilst further north lie the dread Chaos Wastes from which incursions by the armies of the ruinous powers are launched upon the Old World.

Westerly, beyond the Great Ocean, is the equally vast land mass known as the New World, comprising of Naggaroth in the north and Lustria in the south. Also called the Land of Chill, Naggaroth harbours the slave fleets of the Dark Elves which raid far and wide in search of fresh victims. While deep in the steaming jungles are the spawning pools of the mysterious and ancient race of Lizardmen. Perpetually shrouded in mist, the isle of Ulthuan, last vestige of the High Elf race, stands alone between the Old World and the New World.

Life is often short and death sudden and unexpected in the Old World. Comparing the similarities between everyday life and Blood Bowl, it is unsurprising then that the game has proven so hugely and enduringly popular. Brought up amidst constant wars, dark forests of horrible monsters and the ever present reality of plague and other incurable diseases, the people of the Old World are natural Blood Bowl players; willing to risk all to win fabulous riches and fame in a world where their future is never certain.

The Old World itself is home to Men, Dwarfs, Elves and Halflings. These civilised folks are numerous and powerful, dwelling throughout the land and defended by large, well fortified cities. And they need to be, for the high mountains and deep forests that cover much of the continent are also home to hordes of evil creatures that blight the land: Orcs, Goblins and shunned Necromancers with their dire entourages. Even below the surface exists an insidious threat, where the Skaven scurry through their labyrinthine domain, ever plotting the downfall of Men and the rise of the Under Empire.

Considering the vast number of races that hate each other's guts it is hardly surprising that wars between the different races are a frequent state of affairs in the Old World. Rebellions and uprisings often overturn nations and plunge them into civil war, while ancient feuds and bitter hatreds are commonplace. Never the less when two Blood Bowl teams arrive at a city to play a match a special truce is declared which lasts until after the match is over. This means that no matter what the race of the team or its supporters, and barring all-out warfare, nothing will interfere with the playing of the all important game of Blood Bowl.

★★★ *Did you know...*

The top three Spike! Magazine All-time Most Fascinating Players Killed by Explosion are:

1. The late Engel 'The Exterminator' von Evilstein was probably the most violent player ever. Just before he was killed during an explosive attempt to wipe out the entire Underworld Creepers team at one go, he was reckoned to have killed or seriously injured an unbelievable 824 players!

2. Knut Rockkneed of the Asgard Ravens is still the holder of one of the more unlikely NAF records. From 2469-2474, over a period of 40 games, he set off 113 traps without sustaining so much as a scratch. In fact, the Ravens got so used to Knut's good fortune that their opening play in every game was to have him wander around the pitch setting off spear traps, opening pits and making the arena safe for his team-mates. Knut finally met his end when the Dwarf Warhammerers went for broke and mined half of the pitch with explosives. This plan wrecked their entire stadium, killed 7 of their players and brought down the wrath of the NAF, but the Warhammerers were still happy with their choice. "There is no Knut too tough for us to crack!" boasted a spokesman for their owners.

3. Stunted Grom Red-Axe was famous for his 41 league-long scoring rush when fired from an over-loaded cannon during a 2480 match with the Gouged Eye. Grom was the Dwarf Warhammerers' top scorer before his unfortunate death when he looked down the barrel of a blunderbuss which had jammed. Still, he was posthumously awarded the Channel 7 Viewers' Award for Most Entertaining Player Death of 2487.



THE TEAMS

ORC BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Orcs have been playing Blood Bowl since the game was discovered - indeed it was an Orc who discovered the shrine where the sacred box of Nuffle was hidden. Orc teams are very hard-hitting, concentrating on pounding an opponent into the turf to create gaps through which the excellent Orc Blitzers can run. Indeed, if any fault can be found with Orc teams in general it is that they sometimes spend a little bit too much time pounding the opposition, and not enough time running the ball to score!

Orcs have always respected brawn over intelligence and so they frequently make use of Black Orcs and a Troll in their teams, to add even more weight to the front line. In addition, the Orc race has close links with other green-skinned races such as Goblins, and it is not uncommon to find Goblins playing in Orc teams.

FAMOUS ORC TEAMS

Orcland Raiders: Formally the NFC's top Orc team, the Raiders won the very first open Blood Bowl but have since then been unable to repeat the feat. With a long history of exceptional throwers, such as Grishnak Goblin-Throttler and Greaser Geargrinder, the Raiders have surprised many opponents waiting for a ground attack by their hulking Black Orcs and blitzers only to see the "un-Orcy" tactic of a long bomb reaching one of their three Goblin catchers who darts down the pitch to score, much to the chagrin of the opposing coach.

War Hawks: Emerging from MAD (the old Dungeonbowl league) the War Hawks have been known to spend most of the game trying to find chests and 'teleportaz' or raking about in the changing rooms looking for the ball and peering warily into lockers as if they'd explode. Still the team does remarkably well in the Dungeonbowl and we're sure they'll eventually get used to the wide open spaces. At least the possibility of "da sky falling on our 'edz!" doesn't seem to scare them as much as it used to.



FAMOUS ORC TEAM PROFILE: THE GOUGED EYE

Team Colours: Red and White

Owner: Skullcrush XIV

Head Coach: Rip Sorepain

Players: Orcs



Under the ownership of tribal overlord, His Most Grossest Majesty, Emperor Skullcrush XIV the Gougued Eye were finally able to emerge from the shadow of the Reikland Reavers. With the collapse of the NAF, the Gougued Eye have unleashed themselves onto the open tournament scene with hard tackling, grinding drives and a desire to show the rest of the world that 'Da Eye iz bak!'

- 2403 Slaves captured by Orc raiding parties tell the Gougued Eye tribe of a wondrous game played by humans. A spying party manages to kidnap a coach, and soon the Orcs of the Gougued Eye are playing their first few matches. Unfortunately, since the man they captured was a specialist rushing trainer, the team have great trouble passing the ball - trouble which sees them lose all but one of their first seventy-two games.
- 2429 Undaunted by early failures, the Gougued Eye finally realises what they are doing wrong, and manage to kidnap passing expert Vimmy Gloam after a late-night Middenheim Marauders training session. After just a little persuasion, he tells them all he knows, and under his guidance the Orc team develops into a formidable fighting, er, playing machine.
- 2431 Their first year in the old central division, under the captaincy of Eruk Ogrehack, the Eye manages a respectable third place. A recruiting drive pioneered by Blood Bowl fan, Emperor Skullcrush XI allows Orcs a chance between a spell in the army or in the team. Thousands flock to join the Gougued Eye.
- 2464 Unbelievably, the Gougued Eye beats the Reavers in a last ditch play-off scramble bloodbath and go all the way to the champions' rostrum when they defeat the Dwarf Giants at the Middenheim Stadium. The Team Captain was Hurk Vermismasher, but honour must go to the thrice scorer Bolg Stonemangle (later known as 'Dwarfsmangle!')
- 2495 Captained by Varag Ghouel Chewer and with ace thrower Harg Vainkill in top form, the Eye wins their third Blood Bowl against the Champions of Death. As head coach, Gort Sever-limb and Harg Vainkill announce their retirement from the game after the match, they are shockingly joined by Varag who announces he will now become one of the many stars on the freelance circuit leaving the Eye severely weakened and unable to defend the Championship the following year.
- Now With former star Black Orc, Rip Sorepain taking up the coaching position, the Eye is back to pounding heads and breaking bones, featuring undoubtedly one of the toughest lines in the game today, led by (allegedly) Half Black Orc - Half Ogre, Krut Killkrunch and backed up by the massive Troll Glop Vomitbrains. This line has been known to stop even the most dangerous of rushing games while opening up holes for the blitzers to run down.

Team Honours: Blood Bowl winners 2464 (IV), 2473 (XIII), 2495 (XXXIV); Chaos Cup winners 2441, 2445, 2450-2454, 2460, 2469, 2473, 2477, 2482-83; AFC Champion winners 2435, 2464, 2470, 2473, 2474, 2478

Hall of Fame: Eruk Ogrehack, Bolg Stonemangle, Garg Worm-face, Harg Vainkill

Spike! Magazine Rating: 302 points

FAMOUS DWARF TEAM PROFILE: DWARF GIANTS

Team Colours: Dark Grey and Blue

Owner: Thorn Durinsgold III

Head Coach: Gudrun Wolfric

Players: Dwarfs

The Giants are an old team with a very long and distinguished history. They were one of Roze-El's original Blood Bowl sects, and they have been present for every major development in the game's history. In more recent times, thanks to the motivation of team owner and patron King Durinsgold III, they have consolidated their talents and relaunched themselves into the fully-modernised, up-to-the-minute, high-tech Blood Bowl game of today.



2381 When they realise their religion is getting in the way of having a good time, the Illuminated Seers of the Sacred Orb of Nuffle change their name, update their rather stuffy image, and become the Dwarf Giants. Retiring captain Varak Varaksson becomes Head Coach, and sets about instituting a ruthless retraining program.

2400 After numerous modest successes, the Giants' good fortunes reach a peak when they end the season as league champions. However, a long and bloody underground war against various Orc and Goblin armies lead by Argvak Pentel begins soon after and the entire team is drafted. When the war ends - 36 years later - the team is all but forgotten. However, thanks to some serious determination from new coach Karrag (Varaksson died heroically in the war), the Giants are soon ready for action again, even winning the NFC league championship in 2438.

Now In more modern times the Giants have consolidated their skills with typical Dwarf patience. Under the tuition of youthful new coach Wolfric, and the inspired (and some would say quite crazy) captaincy of Grimwold Grimbreath ('The Helmsmasher!'), the Giants are regularly setting new records for fatalities and touchdowns alike.

Team Honours: Blood Bowl Winners 2462 (II), 2484 (XIV); Orcidas Team of the Year 2484

Hall of Fame: Durgul 'The Killer' Hilliman, Coach Farakhan Karrag, Varak Varaksson

Spike! Magazine Rating: 299 points



Grimwold Grimbreath, Captain of the Dwarf Giants

DWARF BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Dwarfs were one of the very first races to play Blood Bowl. Many Dwarf teams can trace back their history to the early years of the game. Dwarfs tend to use a running game, grinding their opponents into the ground as they go and working on the principal of high casualty rates opening up the game. Weakness both with and against the passing game has been a feature of the Dwarf game for many centuries. There are, however, so many Dwarf teams around that it is possible to find one to suit any taste. One Dwarf team (Durum's Destroyers) has even built up a good passing game, thanks to the inspired leadership of Bran 'Long Bomb' Ironson.

It is, however, the Dwarfs' reputation for flamboyant illegality in which they are surpassed only by Goblins that makes them such a big hit with the fans. Since it was a Dwarf who first discovered Nuffle's sacred laws and brought the game into being, most Dwarf teams believe they have a lasting right to alter the laws as they choose. The Dwarf Warhammerers, for example, frequently bend the rules of the game, and then claim Roze-El authorised their illicit amendments.

FAMOUS DWARF TEAMS

Dwarf Warhammerers: Arch-Rivals of the Dwarf Giants, the Warhammerers are most interesting because of their perpetual insistence in breaking the rules on the most obvious and flamboyant ways possible. Their latest exploits include mining under the opposing team's dugout and blowing it up at half-time, using a hot-air balloon to get past the opponents' front line, and using, not one, but *eleven* Deathrollers on the same play!

The Grudge Bearers: The Grudge Bearers are another one of the new teams that have proven successful since the collapse of the NAF. The Grudge Bearers were formed in 2492 entirely from members of the Dwarf Scribes and Book-Keepers Guild, who had become fed-up simply writing about the game and wanted to take part. All of the years hunched over books and manuscripts paid off, however, and the Grudge Bearers quickly became famous for their intricate and well-planned plays, as well as for never forgetting an insult or dirty trick carried out by an opponent, of course!

Morgantown Mad Dogs: The Mad Dogs are best known for their frequent use of the Killdozer, a massive piece of mechanics first developed by the Dwarf Anvils to rival the Deathroller. Instead of trying to roll over opponents, the Killdozer has the ability to push virtually anything in front of it out of the way. Travelling ahead of the ball carrier, the Killdozer has cleared the path to many a touchdown for the Mad Dogs.

★ ★ ★ Did you know...

The highest score in a Championship game in 2493 was the Marauders 7-0 defeat of the Bugman's Best Dwarf team in the Blood Bowl play-offs. Many blame the defeat on the fact that the Dwarf players had been sampling the brew after which their team is named (the renowned Dwarf beer known as Bugman's XXXXXX) before the match started. Consequently most of the Dwarf players could barely stand up, let alone play Blood Bowl!



GOBLIN BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Where do you start with Goblin teams? Generally at the lower end of the rankings. This is not to say that Goblin teams are not very good. It's just that... Well.. alright, they are not very good. It's just very difficult to write anything positive about a team that has members that spend the night before the game drinking (in silly hats), turn up to the game yelling abuse (in silly hats) and go to the pub after the game for more drinking and yelling of abuse (in silly hats). Especially since that's just the Coaching Staff. Most Goblin players will get into countless fights (which they usually lose), drinking contests (which they usually lose as well but not before drinking up a massive bar tab), thievery and all manners of hooliganism before the games, and during the games they behave even worse! It's no surprise that ALL goblin teams are permanently barred from the Elven Kingdoms and most Goblin fans are barred from any civilized stadium in the world. Not that they care, they still find a way in so that they can cause more mischief, carnage and utter chaos in the stands.

So what does a Goblin team have going for it? Well without a doubt, they are the masters of the Secret Weapon (though the Dwarfs run a very close second). A Goblin team will often field players equipped with bombs, chainsaws, pogo sticks of doom and even wildly spinning ball and chain fanatics. All of these combined can wreck utter carnage on a team not prepared for the onslaught (and for that matter the Goblin team themselves when things go wrong, as they inevitably do). What else does a Goblin team have going for it? Well ... the majority of Goblin teams will feature two hulking great Trolls. Almost impossible to stop once moving and practically unkillable, what Trolls lack in intelligence they make up for in strength, toughness and appetite as any unfortunate goblin would testify to if he could.



Still Goblins just lack a basic talent for the game. Sure they run at a decent speed and they can dodge well, but the poor ball handling and general.. uhm.. 'squishiness' of the average goblin will always keep them down at the lower end of the rankings.

FAMOUS GOBLIN TEAMS

Lowdown Ratz: Owned and coached by the infamous Hymie Snivel, the Ratz are the most mediocre of Goblin teams. Regularly causing more casualties on themselves through botched secret weapons than the opposition does, as well as having two Trolls that spend 99% of the game sleeping or eating Goblins, they are one of the worst teams to ever step foot on the pitch. Occasionally they might win a game, but that's normally when the opponents don't turn up or because of some miracle: a bomb lands in the right place, or a chainsaw decapitates a star thrower. However, despite all this, the team is one of the most popular in the history of Blood Bowl and their purple 'n' black fans are a well-known sight at tournaments.

Rock Sweaty: Rock Sweaty is not even a real team. It's a pub in the Badlands. The pub often sends some of its patrons (normally the ones with outstanding tabs) to a tournament to try and earn a few gold coins to pay back the pub. If they do not succeed, then at least they won't be back to put more money on their tab. Sadly for the owners there are a few patrons that keep on returning from tournaments in one piece (admittedly not a sober piece).

HALFLING BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Why Halflings actually make the effort of getting all kitted out for a game every week, only to be perpetually stomped into the ground and left for dead, has been a complete mystery to a great many sports fans (and Goblin bookies) for years. The answer is simple (at least to a Halfling)! According to Halfling tradition, everyone who plays in a game gets to join in a gigantic slap-up feast after the game is over! It is not unusual to see injured Halflings get up from their stretchers and tear off in the direction of the dressing room when the final whistle is blown! These post-game banquets are so extensive that the best of Master Chefs who prepare them during the game fill the entire stadium with aromas that often prove incredibly inspirational to the Halfling team (while being equally distracting to the opposing team). Even knowing the post-game buffet is waiting, Halflings can be completely unreliable players. Many have nasty habits such as sneaking off the pitch for a quick hot dog or a pre-feast snack, or refusing to come out of the dugout until they have finished their iced sticky bun and glass of Orca-Cola.



Halfling coaches are also infamous for overcompensating for their shortcomings by recruiting the biggest of the big guys to assist the team. Most Halfling teams will sport at least two massive Treemen who like the little guys because they are the only race of the short lived ones (which to Treemen even include Elves) who will listen to their incredibly boring and long-winded stories. Only young Treemen (under 250 years old) will help Halfling teams as old Treemen are normally reclusive and do not mix with the other races. Occasionally a Treeman is also seen on a tree-hugging Wood Elf team. Fans love the Treemen both for their ability to plant opposing players into the pitch with lumbering swings of their huge limbs and for the chance to cry 'Timmeeee-ber!' when one of the goliaths is actually knocked over by the opposing team.

FAMOUS HALFLING TEAMS

Greenfield Grasshuggers: The Grasshuggers are best known for their 2482 match against the Asgard Ravens when Storm Giant Gurk CloudScraper played his first (and last) game. Foolish ex-coach Omo Snuffsniffer continued to send in substitutes for injured and dead players throughout the match. The Grasshuggers finally gave up when the 734th corpse was carried from the pitch. New legislation limiting teams to only 16 players was rushed through the very next week.

The Iron Chefs: The Chefs are one of the few Halfling teams that opponents actually fear to play. It has to be said that this is more for the fact that the team includes the towering Treemen the Ironwood brothers, Teakoak and Mapleleaf, and frequently features the mightiest Treeman blocker to walk the Moot, Deeproot Strongbranch, than for any other reason. The Chefs are also famous for their 'Halfling Hitmen' led by team captain Chins Caneatcheese. The Hitmen are renowned for taking on the finest Blood Bowl has to offer (by being used as living missiles by the Ironwood brothers) in their Kitchen Stadium and coming out on top (usually by bouncing off the opposing players' heads). As the Chefs' head coach, Kaga Sakisushi, points out "I've assembled the finest the Moot had to offer and we'll take advantage of any edge we can get".

SKAVEN BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Skaven society is highly stratified and bound up on complex rituals, but on the Blood Bowl pitch all barriers drop away as every player gives his all for his teams' complete and utter victory. The game has become very popular in all layers of Skaven society - the Skaven love any opportunity for mindless violence. In fact, it is very difficult to persuade them that there is any other purpose to the game once they are on the pitch, or even when they are just spectating in the stands! Some of the greatest all-time Player Death and Crowd Death records have occurred in games in which the Skaven appeared.

True to their warped nature the Skaven have adapted the game to their own special ways. A new clan has been formed to govern and control the game - the Clan Rigens. The Clan Rigens consists of an unknown number of teams with the most famous being the Skavenblight Scramblers; the three time winners of the Blood Bowl trophy. Several other teams have achieved successes in other, lesser leagues and competitions, and there are mixed teams with Skaven in them competing at various levels. Of course, the Skaven's close association with warpstone and the resulting mutations has helped with this success, but even the basic Skaven player has a lot going for him with speed few races can equal. It's only a matter of time before a Skaven team makes it to the top again.

FAMOUS SKAVEN TEAMS

The Underworld Creepers: The Creepers are not a pure Skaven team, but an unlikely combination of Skaven and Goblins. The Creepers are famous for the innovative dirty tricks and dastardly tactics they use in order to try to win, for the weird mutations that Goblins on the team have grown from excessive warpstone exposure, and for the acrimonious and violent arguments that break out in their dugout when their over ambitious plans back-fire (as they almost invariably do). These three qualities have made the Creepers a big hit with the fans, even if their large following is not rewarded by strong successes on the Blood Bowl pitch!



Skitter Stab-Stab forgets the use of weapons is strictly against the rules...

FAMOUS SKAVEN TEAM PROFILE: SKAVENBLIGHT SCRAMBLERS

Team Colours: Yellow

Owner: The city of Skavenblight

Head Coach: Vytik the Many Headed

Players: Skaven



Rising from the foulest sewers of the land, the Skavenblight Scramblers are the world's premier Skaven team. Three times winners of the Blood Bowl the team is a vicious mixture of the natural speed of the Skaven and the brutal raw power of the Rat Ogres. It can surely be only a matter of time before the Scramblers reach the top again.

- 2442 The city of Skavenblight invests numerous chunks of warpstone into a minor team in Clan Rigens - The Scramblers. Success immediately finds the team (as well as numerous mutations) and the Scramblers become the top team in Clan Rigens in a matter of months. They even finish as the Warpstone Bowl champions (an all Skaven tournament), a title they hold for five consecutive years.
- 2461 After an exhibition game on the eve of the 2461 season between the NAF's Potbelly Piemen and the now Skavenblight Scramblers in the deepest pits of Skavenblight the thoroughly beaten Halflings are sold into slavery because they were unable to pay the suddenly introduced "Warpstone Tax for teams beaten by the Scramblers on the eve of the new NAF season". Without a team to replace the Piemen at such short notice the NAF duly award the newly vacated spot in the league to the Scramblers.
- 2478 After spending the whole year rigging their stadium for the finals with traps, bottomless pits and a very abnormal slope down to the opponent's end zone while a team of reserves set about qualifying for the finals, the Skavenblight Scramblers rout the Gouged Eye to become the first (and only!) team to win the Blood Bowl two years in a row. Star Players of the day were Skrag the Unclean and Glart Smaship who inflicted 13 bouts of extreme nausea and 6 fatalities respectively.
- 2493 The Scramblers hold aloft another record as they become the only team to win the Blood Bowl and the Chaos Cup in the same year and were promptly elected "Team of the Year". The success was attributed to the introduction of a fearsome Rat Ogre into the team. Early experiments with the wild creatures had initially met with more fatalities for the Scramblers than the opponents, but after selective breeding by Clan Moulder, the Rat Ogres eventually understood the rudimentary concepts of the game. Rat Ogres have now become a regular feature on most successful Skaven teams, many sporting mutations such as additional limbs or tentacles.
- Now The Scramblers and fellow Skaven side the Doomfire Warhunters were to play each other in the opening game of the Blood Bowl Tournament. However the game was so highly anticipated by the Skaven fans that many had to be turned back at the turnstiles. So the Skaven did what any self respecting mutated, 5 foot tall rat would do... They dug underground to try and sneak into the stadium. When the opening kick-off arrived, the ground underneath was so unstable that the entire pitch collapsed (inflicting 14 fatalities). The Warhunters suffered the worst of the damage, but even the Scramblers couldn't put their team back together in time for the Blood Bowl championship.

Team Honours: Blood Bowl Winners 2477 (XVII), 2478 (XVIII), 2493 (XXXII); Chaos Cup Winners 2493; Orcidas Team of the Year 2478, 2493

Hall of Fame: Tarsh Surehands, Breet Braingulper, Rasta Tailspike

Spike! Magazine Rating: 146 points (after the tunneling disaster)

FAMOUS HUMAN TEAM PROFILE: REIKLAND REAVERS

Team Colours: Blue and Yellow

Owner: JJ Griswell Jr

Head Coach: Helmut Zwimmer

Players: Humans



The Reavers were formed over a century ago, in 2389, when a vacant franchise came up in what was then the Oldlands Conference. Known during their first few years as the Altdorf Acolytes, the team quickly established their reputation for great skill and ability, as original owner DD Griswell Snr poached and bought up the best players throughout the western lands! This policy of marrying awesome buying power with the best money can buy has seen the Reavers in good stead throughout their long life. Today, under DD's great-grandson JJ Griswell Jr, the Reavers are probably the finest all round team in the known world.

- 2389 The Altdorf Acolytes formed by a business consortium in association with the people of Altdorf, make their base at the Griswell Memorial Stadium. Thanks to the sterling efforts of head coach Johann Weisshaupt and the large treasury of DD Griswell Snr., in their 1st season they come 4th in the Whiteskull Challenge Cup (now the Chaos Cup).
- 2396 When the Griswell Memorial Stadium collapses during a storm (amid rumours of paybacks and cost-cutting by the firm who built it), the team changes its name to the Reikland Reavers and sets up home at the new Altdorf Oldbowl. No-one is quite sure where either of those names comes from, but both help the Reavers to their first cup win, beating the Wupertal Wotans in the final.
- 2411 DD Griswell Jr. takes over as team owner on the death of his father. Head coach at this time is Blind Willy Muller. The Reavers slump to their worst placing ever. Muller is reputed to have got the job through blackmailing DD Jr.
- 2432 The Reavers start the 1st season of a 14-year low patch when 11 members of the first team are infected during a Nurgle's Rotters game and have to transfer to the Subterranean Slimeballs. DD Griswell Jr. is replaced by son JJ Griswell Snr.
- 2468 JJ Griswell Snr. dies during an Asgard Ravens fixture, and is replaced by current owner JJ Griswell Jr. New head coach Helmet Zwimmer arrives soon after, and institutes his 'New Order' of training and preparation.
- 2485 Reikland thrashes the Darkside Cowboys to win Blood Bowl XXIV, but only after surprise substitute Orlak Sturmtrang replaces fatally-injured captain, Wolfram von Beck, after only ninety seconds. Mighty Zug sets his still-unbeaten Most Opponents Bitten in One Match record.
- 2487 Griff Oberwald (incidentally, Sturmtrang's half-cousin!) leads the team to their 4th Blood Bowl championship after replacing Orlak as team captain when Orlak finds dealing with his groupies as a megastar too much pressure.
- 2489 The Reavers are one of the few teams to survive the collapse of the NAF unscathed, thanks mainly to the astute financial planning of team owner JJ Griswell Jr.
- 2491 The Reavers silence sceptics who said they couldn't adjust to the new open tournaments by storming back to win Blood Bowl XXXI in a close final against the Marauders.
- Now After winning the Blood Bowl for the 6th time Griff Oberwald leaves the Reavers to turn freelance. While this rocks the team it will be only a matter of time before Coach Zwimmer creates the next generation of super stars to immortalize the team.

Team Honours: Blood Bowl Winners 2471 (XI), 2479 (XIX), 2485 (XXV), 2487 (XXVII), 2491 (XXX), 2499 (XXXVIII); Chaos Cup Winners 2396, 2399-2405, 2412, 2422-2427, 2448, 2461, 2463, 2470

Hall of Fame: Walter damn Kempft, Erdrich Holstein, Coach Johann Weisshaupt, Jules Winder

Spike! Magazine Rating: 295 points

HUMAN BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

No single race can claim to be as versatile at Blood Bowl as the Human race. Adept at all aspects of the game, Humans suffer no weaknesses such as the fragility of the Wood Elves, or the slowness of the Dwarfs. Without any doubt, Humans are the best all round players, and Human teams have won ten Blood Bowl championships since the start of the Bloodweiser sponsorship in 2461, with many more appearances in the final and numerous successes in the other majors. With a fast set of catchers, powerful blitzers, great throwers and linemen that hold the line bravely, you might wonder how any team can beat the Humans.

However, Human teams do lack the sheer brute strength of Orcs, the staying power of the Undead, and the incredible speed of the Skaven (as demonstrated a couple of years back when the Darkthunder Cheatahs ran wild over the Reavers defence). Those teams that can force the Humans to try and match their own strengths can often win the match. Don't put the Human teams out to pasture just yet, though, as they are always at the top end of the tournament rankings and it was only as recent as 2503 that the last Human team won the Blood Bowl. Anyone would be a fool to dismiss Humans as 'average'.

Since the collapse of the NAF many coaches have found that adding Ogres to a Human team can add some brute power to the team's repertoire. Though thuggish and, well, stupid, 'humanized' Ogres have been performing well on many of the top teams recently and it is rare for a Human team to take to the pitch without one. Certain teams such as the Crusaders and the Reavers still do not field Ogres, but you wonder how long before the Griswells take the plunge and invest in some top Ogre talent.

Whatever you decide to do with your gold crowns, you could do a lot worse than put those crowns on one of the top Human teams entering the Blood Bowl this year.

FAMOUS HUMAN TEAMS

Bright Crusaders: The Crusaders could be a truly great Blood Bowl team, if it wasn't for one serious handicap - they never, ever foul or cheat! While other teams are preparing for the match by bribing referees and laying down spiked pit traps the Crusaders are playing charity matches and helping old ladies across the street. This will stop them from winning any major tournament until they shape up and learn to play dirty!

Creeveland Crescents: One of the oldest teams in existence, the Crescents are now coached by famous former Crescent blitzer Harry Kehry. With the recent purchase of Rrr'krag Smma'gugg from the Oldheim Ogres, the Crescents look to be making another push towards championship glory. Whether they can match up to the Marauders or the Reavers remains to be seen. Look out folks, because if the Crescents manage to get themselves a favourable schedule for the open rounds, they could make the Semis or even the Blood Bowl final.

The Marauders: The Marauders used to be known as the Middenheim Marauders, but they changed their name when they were forced to sell their stadium and take to the open road following the collapse of the NAF in 2489. Many say that this has been the making of them, and there is no doubt that the Marauders are now one of the top Blood Bowl teams playing the game. A return match against arch-rivals the Reikland Reavers (who last defeated the Marauders at Blood Bowl XXXVIII) is eagerly anticipated by Blood Bowl fans throughout the Old World, and in quite a few places beyond!

DARK ELF BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Over five thousand years ago the Elf Kingdoms underwent a costly civil war brought about by a group of renegades known as the Dark Elves. Greedy for worldly power the Dark Elves forsook their traditional deities to worship the darker gods of evil magic. The war lasted for seven centuries and resulted in the banishment of the Dark Elves from the Elf Kingdoms. Embittered by their enforced exile, the Dark Elves became even more decadent and are now counted amongst the most useful of all the servants of Evil. They are still concentrating their considerable and malevolent powers against their kin above all others. But by Nuffle can they play Blood Bowl!

Dark Elf teams use similar tactics to their Elven cousins, being equally suited to a throwing game. But sheer spite makes the Dark Elves enjoy the running game, particularly when a team includes a remarkable runner such as the now retired Jeremiah 'The Flashing Blade' Kool. With the cruel blitzers quite literally blasting a hole in the opposition lines the runners can quickly sprint through for a touchdown before the mayhem begins once more. The frenzied Witch Elves can quickly tear into an unprepared team, and the Dark Elf assassins that lurk in the background can strike without warning (or, it appears, the referee noticing), stabbing an opponent as they go for a touchdown and often ending his game early, if not his life.

Dark Elves hate everything. Being an utterly cruel, arrogant and xenophobic race they give no mercy, nor do they expect any. Games against the hated High Elves have often erupted into all out war and a charity match a couple of years ago that featured Jeremiah Kool and Valen Swift ended up as a full scale battle before the two sides (and fans) were separated by a local army. Considering all this, why have Dark Elves not been that successful? Most attribute it to the arrogance of the race. They see no need to try and arrange an easy schedule in the open tournaments believing that their natural skill and ability will see them through easily. Many also blame the cruelty of the team; as a runner with seconds left to score a game winning touchdown will often stop for a quick stomp on the neck of a fallen opponent while time runs out.

FAMOUS DARK ELF TEAMS

White Bay Arrows: A Dark Elf team that hasn't won a game in 30 years. Famous? Well not for that fact, but they are famous for their match against the Frozen Phantoms. Back in 2476 the Arrows took to the pitch against the Phantoms following a three day effort to get 90,000 frenzied Arrows fans into a cave barely large enough for the pitch alone. The game started with the usual problem for the ethereal Phantoms - they couldn't touch the ball. However, their spell casting coach has reputedly made the referee, all the Arrow players and all their fans ethereal as well! Thus far, no-one has scored, no-one has been hurt, no-one has even made contact with anyone else... The ball deflated after the first year. And, despite his best efforts, the referee has yet to blow his whistle to end the game.

Naggarothe Nightmares: The Nightmares are a new team that was founded after the collapse of the NAF. Many of the team's players come from the disbanded Naggarothe Nightwings, who went bankrupt after the Head Coach took flight with the team treasury. With a wealth of young (to elven standards) talent and two new assassin stars, the Razzor brothers, a match against the team has already turned out to be a living nightmare for more than one opponent!

FAMOUS DARK ELF TEAM PROFILE: DARKSIDE COWBOYS

Team Colours: Black and Blue (like their opponents)

Owner: Prince Derren ar-Lolovia

Head Coach: Luxen Tuentir

Players: Dark Elves

The twisted, degenerate Dark Elf race is infamous for the worship of weird and deviant violence, and Blood Bowl fits into their religious beliefs very well indeed. The Cowboys are a cruel, ultra-violent team, and consequently do very well at the game. The combination of high intelligence, natural grace, degenerate violence and hatred of all living things has helped them to the top on more than one occasion.



- 2422 The Old World first learns of the existence of the Darkside Cowboys when the Halfling Pinkfoot Panthers visit them for a friendly match and don't return!
- 2438 Several teams threaten to boycott the Cowboys when they apply to join the official NAF league, but the pale-skinned assassins are admitted anyway. Instantly sordid revelations started to appear about their peculiar habits, such as using trussed-up Snotlings as balls to save wear on expensive imported ones. These rumours only seem to heighten the Cowboys' mystique with thrill-starved fans.
- 2461 The Cowboys play in the very first Blood Bowl, beating the Chaos All-Stars in a very sloppy game (literally - the Cowboys used illegal magic to turn most of the All-Stars front line into slugs!).
- 2473 The Cowboys nearly disband after the infamous match against the Kishago Werebears (which lasted for 19 days before being abandoned at 2-2 on the death of the last player on either side). New NAF rules limiting the duration of games come too late to save the Werebears, but the Cowboys manage to reform and rebuild their team under the skilled leadership of Jeremiah Kool. Their drive culminates in glory when they win Blood Bowl XXI, during which Kool set his unbroken passing record.
- 2488 Although Kool retired in 2487, his place is more than filled by Hubris Rakarth, the latest in a long line of glamorous Darkside players. In his first season as team captain Hubris earns immortal fame by leading the Cowboys all the way to the Blood Bowl championships that turn out to be the last organised by the old NAF league. While the match is in progress NAF commissioner Nikk Three-horn disappears with the entire NAF treasury and most of the Cowboys cheerleaders!
- Now The Cowboys have survived both the collapse of the NAF and Hubris turning freelance to enter a period of intense training (and sacrificing to Khaine of unwary opposing fans). With a Dark Elf team winning the 2505 Chaos Cup, experts say that the Cowboys' year will soon arrive again.

Team Honours: Blood Bowl Winners 2461 (I), 2481 (XXI), 2488 (XXVIII); Orcidas Team of the Year 2481

Hall of Fame: Rokudan Fey, Jeremiah 'Flashing Blade' Kool

Spike! Magazine Rating: 270 points

★ ★ ★ Did you know...

Dark Elves are renowned for being evil and depraved - and that's just the cheerleaders! However, the nastiest Dark Elf of all must be Hubris Rakarth of the Darkside Cowboys, who is so incredibly cruel and vicious that we simply don't dare tell you what he is capable of, in case he finds out and comes to get us!



OGRE BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Ogres have been playing Blood Bowl since the game was re-discovered. In fact they were the first of the 'big guys', as they were known to take to the pitch. After all, possessing a childish intelligence, a destructive nature, and great strength and size, they are the perfect Blood Bowl players. Ogres have featured on many teams, and the famous Morg 'n' Thorg was voted "The greatest player of all time" last year in a Spike! Magazine poll.



While Ogres are commonly found on teams as a single player, actual Ogre teams are far less common. This has much to do with the fact that getting 11 Ogres onto the same pitch at the same time is practically impossible due to the tendency of Ogres to flat out forget what they are doing, to get involved in a brawl in the dugout or to just go to the nearest pub and get utterly hammered. Because of this, Ogre coaches (the smartest of their kin) tend to fill out the team with lesser races to gently nudge and remind the big guys what they are supposed to be doing. Up until recently Ogre coaches would often use Goblins to help, but after more than one Ogre team went bankrupt due to the kleptomaniac tendencies of the Goblins, Ogre teams started using an even lesser race to help, Snotlings.

Surprisingly Snotlings do have some advantages over Goblins. The main one, of course, being a general lack of 'sticky fingers' and thus a healthier bank balance for the team. They're also incredibly nimble, and more than a few players have been left red faced as a Snotling darted between their legs for a touchdown. Of course, Snotlings also have a long list of disadvantages, the main one being the utter lack of staying power on the pitch. A player knows that when he needs a mate to give him an even chance of beating up a Halfling he's facing an up hill battle. Even tripping on a stone has led to Snotling fatalities, and the more often a Snotling gets thrown down the pitch by an Ogre, the larger the chance that one of these days he will land head first in the end zone and the last thing going through his mind will be the turf.

FAMOUS OGRE TEAMS

Oldheim Ogres: The first ever, and undoubtedly most famous, of all the Ogre teams has even won a Blood Bowl (2475 against the Reavers for you trivia fans). While success hasn't been a common occurrence for them, they have been known to cause the odd upset as last year's victory over the Gouged Eye in the Chaos Cup semi-finals has shown. Despite this, you can't help but wonder if the Ogres will ever again reach the lofty heights of a Blood Bowl final.

Hikuuru Headhunters: Quite literally the players of this team are headhunters. Formed from an ancient tribe of headhunting Ogres from the Southlands, this team has been turning heads on the open circuit (and turning, and turning, until the heads pop off!). Led by Dibongo 'Da Spearer', the Headhunters have not only been using Snotlings as ball carriers to launch down the pitch, but also as missiles to throw at the opposition. These Ogres, with their natural spear throwing talents, have been taking out opponents before they even get into the Headhunters' half, not only causing a high casualty rate on the opposition, but also a huge Snotling death rate, much to the fans' delight.

WOOD ELF BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Wood Elves live in the enchanted forest of Loren in Bretonnia. They are physically identical to High Elves, but prefer to wear very little armour, favouring simple clothes of natural colours such as greens or ruddy browns. Their kingdom is far older than the Human realms that surround it, and is generally avoided by Humans who know that any creature that enters the forest with evil intent invites a swift death from an unseen arrow or a sudden sword strike. This means that Wood Elves are rarely seen by other races, except when one of their teams and its fans arrive as if from nowhere to play a match, disappearing back into the countryside just as mysteriously once the game is over!

Wood Elves make natural Blood Bowl players, although their refusal to wear heavy armour does leave them vulnerable to some of the more hard hitting opposing teams. Generally, however, the Wood Elves' natural athletic ability is enough to keep them out of trouble - it takes a fast or cunning foe to lay a hand on a Wood Elf player! In any case, no Wood Elf worth his salt is going to be weighted down by extra armour and be forced to lurk about and attempt to knock opposing players over. For Wood elves the long pass is everything, even more so than for their High Elf cousins who have mastered the short and mid-range passing game. All the effort of their expert Throwers goes into throwing as far as their lightning quick Catchers can run, while the Linemen struggle to hold off the opposition. The one exception to this is the Wood Elf Wardancers. These former performance artists are also extremely athletic warriors and trained not only in acrobatics but also the deadly arts of hand-to-hand combat and are a match for almost any foe.



FAMOUS WOOD ELF TEAMS

The Athelorn Avengers: The Athelorn Avengers are one of the old NAF teams that has taken extremely well to the new open tournament style of play. The Avengers insist that this is because the open tournaments suit their free-wheeling and easy-going style, though less kind critics say that it's because they are no longer stuck in the same division as their (far more successful) arch-rivals the Darkside Cowboys! Whatever the reason, the Avengers are on a roll at present with wins at both the Dungeonbowl and the Blood Bowl since the NAF's collapse.

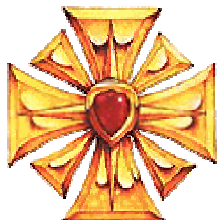
The Deepwood Falcons: The Deepwood Falcons are a relatively new Wood elf team that, with a Treeman in their lineup, have caused something of a storm. Hickoryswitch Longbark is a cutting from one the most famous Treeman players ever, Evergreen Redwood of the Halfling Cookie Monsters, and has proved to be a chip off the old block. Longbark has given the Falcons a hard hitting edge that most Wood Elf teams lack, and many commentators are tipping them as the Wood Elf team to watch.

FAMOUS ELF TEAM PROFILE: KALLAHIR SWIFTS

Team Colours: Blue and Orange

Owners and Head Coaches:
Lucien and Valen Swift

Players: Elves



The year 2501 was one that every Blood Bowl fan remembers. During a press conference after a match between the Galadrieth Gladiators and the Elfheim Eagles both Lucien and Valen Swift, sick of being classed as second rate players amongst the now money filled High Elf teams announce their joint retirement effective immediately. However, as many retired players have found out, the cheers of the crowd and the sight and sounds of a crunching tackle or a glorious catch are difficult to stay away from. Two months later, the Swift brothers announce they are forming their own team without any backings from the Elven Kingdoms.

2502 Investing their combined savings Lucien and Valen rent out a training ground and purchase 16 blue and orange uniforms (blue from the Gladiators and orange from the Eagles). Immediately they are overwhelmed by many old team-mates and rivals as well as many younger Elves who do not want to play alongside the Princes of the High Elf teams. After a gruelling summer training camp, the two brothers pick the 16 players to be the first to wear the Swifts uniform.

2503 During one of their first games Valen Swift notices a silver haired cheerleader throwing a rock perfectly at an unsuspecting opponent near the sidelines (which was on the other side of the pitch and resulted in a KO). Impressed by her throwing abilities, Valen offered the lass a try out for one of the Swifts' thrower positions. She aces the tryout and Lauriala Vinetree dons Valen Swifts old face mask and becomes the first female thrower for a non-Amazon Blood Bowl team. In her first game she throws two touchdown passes to Highelm Lyrpadre and runs for another against the Altdorf Underachievers.

2504 Lauriala in only her second year breaks Harg Vainkill's passing record with 157 passes thrown for 2321 paces. All the passing records in Blood Bowl, however, cannot help the Swifts as they find themselves going into the Majors with a depleted squad due to old injuries catching up with many of the veteran players. The team is forced to drop out of the Spike! Tournament to setup a training camp for a new generation of facemasks, spikes and mohawks.

Now Continually setting the throwing world on fire Lauriala Vinetree goes from strength to strength under the tuition of Valen Swift. In three years she has become the best thrower in the tournament circuit with her unnerving accuracy. As many of her male opponents have found out, she has a bullet throw that will bring tears to any man's eyes. With Lucien Swift coaching the up and coming young blitzers and with former Eagles catchers Highelm Lyrpadre and Ibrahim Goldawn, the team has become a dangerous combination of beauty, youthfulness and experience.

Team Honours: None yet

Hall of Fame: None yet

Spike! Magazine Rating: 281 points

HIGH ELF AND ELF BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

When Blood Bowl was first played Elves disdained the game. They believed there was no more to Blood Bowl than two teams of uncivilized yobs pummelling each other senseless in a display of mindless violence. However it didn't take them too long to realize that there is nothing to beat seeing your team wipe out the opposition and win a hard-fought Blood Bowl game!

Between 2461 and 2488 two Elven teams were at the top, the Galadrieth Gladiators and the Elfheim Eagles, with both teams winning a Blood Bowl final. However with the collapse of the NAF and the introduction of the open tournament format many Elven teams, the Eagles and the Gladiators included, had to rely on the financial backing of the Elven Kingdoms to survive. After all, the costs of hair gel, mirrors and the dry cleaning for the uniforms can add up quickly. As many teams accepted gracious donations from the Princes and nobles of their homeland they quickly found out these 'donations' came with a price. Those same benefactors would often insist on playing for the team as well.

Initially the mixture of the highborn and the professional players was a disaster for many Elven teams. The Princes would often buy their way into the position they wanted, relegating many long standing players to lineman duties. Who can forget Valen Swift's face as he stood on the line when the Eagles faced off against the Chaos team Kill Fury! As the Elven teams filed up with the rich, many of the experienced Elven players that had played under the NAF's rule retired.

But not many retired players can stay away from the field of glory, and soon teams started forming that consisted only of veteran players that missed the 'good old days'. Dusting off the old uniforms, donning the face masks and spiking the hair up the new 'old' teams took off and became the equals on the pitch of their richer cousins, while reminding many an aged fan of the old NAF Elf teams.



And so the High Elves have found themselves split into two types of teams. On the one hand you have the relatively inexperienced, but well equipped, High Elves from the noble caste and on the other you have the more experienced, but less well equipped, 'Pro' Elves, as they became known. But one thing the two styles of teams will always have in common, they are both masters of the throwing game.

FAMOUS HIGH ELF TEAMS

Galadrieth Gladiators: The Gladiators are probably the most famous High Elf team of them all. They won the Blood Bowl in 2470 and were always top contenders thanks to the best Elven blitzer to grace the pitch, Lucien 'The Silver Bullet' Swift. The team is made up of some of the richest Elves in the Kingdom allowing the Gladiators to literally buy success. They have come close the finals of several major tournaments in recent times. The retirement of Swift a few years back has left them a little short, but it can only be a matter of time before the richest team in Blood Bowl lures in another star for their roster.

FAMOUS ELF TEAMS

Celestial Comets: Coming from the old Dungeonbowl league (MAD) the Comets were sponsored by the College of Celestial Magic. Upon the collapse of the NAF and the integration of the Dungeonbowl into the open circuit they found themselves not needing to look for financial help from the homeland. With many of the experienced and veteran Elven players looking for new teams and with the arrival of the highborn to the Blood Bowl circuit, the Comets took advantage of their unique financial position and became the first of the 'pro' Elven teams.

VAMPIRE BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

We're not ones to make enemies, but we can't help but say that Vampire teams aren't exactly the greatest. In fact, we'd go as far to say they suck... blood of course. Vampires have a lot going for them, they are fast, strong, dexterous and impossible to kill without the aid of a sharp piece of wood. You'd almost think they'd be the best Blood Bowl players to take to the pitch, and in certain ways you'd be correct. If it wasn't for a small problem. This problem, as you might expect, however lies not with the sun, as due to a lotion made of a strange combination of copper and ground up bullfrogs (known to many as CopperFrog Sun Guard) the Vampires can play in the sun for a limited time. Rather, the problem with Vampires is that, with all the exertions of the match going on, the Vampires tend to need to feed a lot, and if there's not one of their Thralls handy nearby to feed off then they just have to run back to the dugout for a tasty maid.



Over the years, Vampires have experimented with using vials and flasks to satisfy the need for blood on the pitch. This, however, has always ended in failure as there is always the block or tackle that sends the container crashing to the ground spilling blood all over the place. As trivia fans may remember, back in 2481 when the Craggen Counts faced off against the Darkforest Ironhooves, the match was abandoned when the Minotaurs and the Vampires spent the entire second half trying to drink the blood that had spilt all over the pitch. So to make up for the need for blood, Vampire teams are often accompanied onto the pitch by Thralls. These Thralls are human servants that



understand the basics of the game and are fully under the control of the Vampires, who also act as handy vessels for the Vampires when they require a feed. This can often lead to problems, though, for instance when a Vampire decides to feed on a Thrall that could otherwise have scored the all-important touchdown.

If the Vampires can keep enough Thralls on the pitch and manage to keep their hunger from taking over, then the team can do wonders. There's not a lot that can stop a Vampire and many teams have come to realise this and know the key to defeating the Vampires is to remove the Thralls from the pitch.

FAMOUS VAMPIRE TEAMS

Black Sabbeths: The Sabbeths were on the way to become the first truly successful Vampire team until one fateful night in 2496. A final 'warm up' game before the Chaos Cup the Vampires played a local Dwarven team the 'Black Mountain Blades'. Fate was not with the Sabbeths that night, as a young human woman raised by Dwarfs named Zara was playing for the Blades and staked the Vampire Lord head coach when he ran onto the pitch. The Thralls snapped out of the hypnotic slavery the Lord had put upon them, and the team fled into the night promptly disbanding. Zara the Slayer now continues to play Blood Bowl, always willing to play for those teams that seek an edge over the Undead.

Streissen Vampires: This team is famous for being one of the worst teams ever. After coming last in every category for three consecutive years, the fans eventually had enough and promptly staked the entire team and the Vampire Lord head coach.

KHEMRI BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

In ages past the two great kingdoms of Lustria and Khemri would often do battle. Gallant warriors from both sides armed themselves, and when the day came, the fans turned up in thousands to watch the first games of Blood Bowl! The Slann and Khemri settled disputes in this ancient time with a game. It was not to last, however, as with the rising of the other nations, the two Kingdoms started to fade away. Somewhere, though, for the last time a game was played and afterwards the great tome of Nuffle the god of Blood Bowl was stored along with 32 suits of armour in a secret place which was sealed for eternity. Or it would have been, had an Orc named Mungk not discovered the resting place of Blood Bowl.

While the Slann rested in Lustria and the Khemri disappeared into the deserts, the game was rediscovered and only a few years ago, with the collapse of the NAF and rise of the touring sides did the game reach Araby. Something stirred in the last few years due to the constant travel of the teams and the magical energy from CabalVision and the Tomb Kings of Khemri awoke to find that the game they once played was now overrun by Elves, Orcs, Dwarfs and the hated Slann's servants - Lizardmen. Outraged over the perceived transgression of the sacred game, the Tomb Kings went into the desert to the Pyramids they once built and summoned forth the mummified remains of the greatest players. Initially things did not go well. Forced to fill squads with regular skeletons the Tomb Kings quickly started looking deeper into the deserts and into the old stadiums and pitches of thousands of years ago for anything that might improve their team's performance.



Scrying the landscape, the Tomb Kings found what they were looking for. The long hidden bones of deceased players killed on the glorious pitches of Nuffle. As the former players clawed their way out the sands that had been their tombs for over eight thousand years, the last moments of life burned with unholy fire in the dusty skulls and they took up the ancient armour they once played in and marched to the pitch to recreate the only life they could remember. The Khemrian Thro-ras and Blitz-ras were back.

FAMOUS KHEMRI TEAMS

Neter-Khertet: Meaning the 'divine afterlife'. Eight thousand years ago, this team was the scourge of the Blood Bowl world. They quickly became famous for the unstoppable C formation (C for Chariot) which was later outlawed. Times have changed though and Neter-Khertet find themselves no longer at the top. In fact far from it, the team being so successful in the past found they had very little deceased players on the old pitches and have had to resort to animating a lot of players from other, less successful, teams. The team's results have been mediocre at best since coming back, however it hasn't stopped head coach Ithiris proudly proclaiming that his star Thro-Ra Khonsu (who happens to be the skeletal remains of a Saurus) will rain glorious death upon all opponents. Sadly however, since Khonsu has trouble picking up the ball, let alone being able to throw even a simple pass his proclamation has yet to happen.

NECROMANTIC AND UNDEAD BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

In the Old World, the dead and the damned do not rest easy. Werewolves prowl the dark forests waiting to strike out at a villager straying too far. Necromancers seek to escape their mortality by searching for forbidden knowledge within the pages of accursed books. Ghouls slink about the graveyards, their insatiable hunger for the flesh of the dead turning them into abominations against nature. Wights guard the tombs of those they served thousands of years ago, an eternal vigil in the darkness. And on the Blood Bowl pitch, players who died long ago return to the scenes of their former glory and play Blood Bowl once again...



While necromancy is outlawed everywhere in the Old World, the actual teams of the dead are a welcome sight to many Blood Bowl stadiums throughout the world. After all why pay to see old CabalVision footage of those greats when you can pop along and see them in the (rotten, decaying, worm infested) flesh! Undead teams are a haven for many of the damned as well as the dead, Werewolves and Ghouls are well known to take the pitch for the Undead to prey on some poor victim holding a pigskin. For many of the damned, the glory of the game is a way to escape the curse they hold, while a Werewolf that hunts and kills a villager to eat will be stalked and killed, the Werewolf that kills on the Blood Bowl pitch will be showered in glory and praise.. Plus he gets a free meal!

However, there's not a lot going for the average Undead players, they tend to be slow, they throw poorly and the skeletons are habitually carried off the pitch in batches of threes and fours while the zombies can often find themselves literally falling to pieces when the going gets tough. To make up for this many Necromancers have added Mummies, Flesh Golems and Wights to (ahem) flesh out the team. However, this hasn't always proven to be very effective as Mummies and Flesh Golems generally take so long to get kitted up that having more than two on the team means you have to arrive four days early and Werewolves tend to get distracted if playing with Skeletal players. Generally Undead teams are split into two types, those that have Weres and Flesh Golems, and those that have Mummies and Skeletons.



FAMOUS NECROMANTIC TEAMS

Bruendar Grimjacks: The Grimjacks were the very first team to experiment with using Flesh Golems instead of Mummies. A long time fan of the team, the Dark Elf Sorcerer, Marishel, created the golem known as Frank N. Stein and presented him to the Grimjacks and while Frank has seen better days (we've lost count of the replacement limbs) everyone recognises the most famous Golem of them all when he lurches into the stadium. Twice winners of the Dungeonbowl in 2481 and 2483, Frank has led the team to some stunning victories over some of the biggest names.

FAMOUS UNDEAD TEAM PROFILE: CHAMPIONS OF DEATH

Team Colours: Black (what else???)

Owners and Head Coach: Tomolandry the Undying

Players: Skeletons, Zombies, Wights, Mummies, and Ghouls



First raised in 2439 deep in the caves of the Coldworm Mountains, the Champions are the property of a gifted Necromancer known as Tomolandry the Undying. The sorcerer has dwelt in these caves for many centuries, wizened by age if not destroyed by it, as he delved ever deeper in the mysteries of the Black Arts. About the year 2425, Tomolandry became bored with all that tedious mucking about with corpses and coffins. He used his skills to tune into what other mages were doing, resulting in him patching himself into the network of the Necromancers Broadcasting Circle, and was delighted to discover Blood Bowl! Soon Tomolandry's enthusiasm grew so much that he started his own football club. However, instead of hiring players, he simply resurrected a dozen skeletons, cast a spell of his own devising which gave them a rudimentary knowledge of the game - and the Champions of Death were (re)born!

- 2439 In their first season the Champions attract much opposition from all the other teams. Tomolandry, in a rare interview with Spike! Magazine, declares that the other teams are just jealous because their players stop playing when they die, and he doesn't have a weekly wages bill to pay!
- 2451 Tomolandry discovers that skeletons raised from the remains of former Blood Bowl players perform much better than his spell enhanced skeletons. Soon after this the Dwarf Giants accuse Tomolandry of kidnapping one of their players, when it is revealed that the skeleton of ex-Giant blocker, Skruhl Halfheight, has been resurrected and is now playing for the Champions! Most teams bring in player contracts stating that players' bodies are still team property even after his death however the NAF refuses to upset Tomolandry by actually enforcing these contract clauses.
- 2468 Realising his team needs more speed, Tomolandry adds some fresh blood (actually it's the team's first actual blood) to the team by hiring a pair of cannibalistic Ghouls. While Ghouls are not actually dead, the Champions find they now have a true running game. In addition, the team is now captained by Ramtut III, a rediscovered mummy of an original Blood Bowl player from eight thousand years ago. With this combination of new players, the Champions storm to victory against the Vynheim Valkyries at Blood Bowl VI.
- 2486 Ramtut III leaves the team to help his Khemri brothers return to the game. This setback is offset by Tomolandry's discovery of a spell to immediately resurrect dead opponents as Zombies to play for the Champions. Furthermore, Count Luthor von Drakenborg replaces Ramtut when Tomolandry offers him all the nubile female blood he can drink for the entire season. Under Luthor's captaincy the team wins its second Blood Bowl, despite some trouble in the quarter-finals when a werewolf opponent ran off with several of the Champions Star Players' leg bones which forced the team to search all night so they could be repaired. Earlier in this year, in what was surely an event not related to the Champions at all, the famous cheerleading squad, the Shadowy Forge Bunnies, vanish while travelling and are never heard from again.
- Now It's taken a while for the Champions to get used to the open tournament style after the NAF collapsed - the dead are notoriously conservative in their ways - but it looks as if they are finally on their way after winning Blood Bowl XL thanks to the brilliant captaincy of Ghoul star player Wrag Bonesnapper.

Team Honours: Blood Bowl winners 2467 (VI), 2486 (XXVI), XL (2501); Chaos Cup winners 2440, 2459, 2461-62, 2467

Hall of Fame: None (no players ever retire - they're simply put into storage for a few years before being revived again!)

Spike! Magazine Rating: 289 points

AMAZON BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Deep in the jungles of Lustria, unknown about until a few years ago. There lives a tribe of fearsome warriors. They take no prisoners, and they won't hesitate to go up against an enemy even twice their number and much better equipped. They are the lost tribe of Amazons. A human, female-dominated tribe, with a hatred of males of any species that goes beyond the realms of normality and borders on insanity. So what better way for these women of the jungle to prove their superiority over their male counterparts than giving them the thrashing of a lifetime on the Blood Bowl pitch!



No-one is one hundred percent sure how the Amazons were introduced to Blood Bowl, but it is generally accepted that they probably learned the game from ancient tablets of the Slann, from watching the Lizardmen play or from encountering Norsemen who were plundering the coastlines for treasure. One thing that everyone can agree on, however, is that the Amazons make formidable Blood Bowl players, possessing strength, speed, agility and a slightly unhinged demeanor plus a general hatred of anyone not of their own.

When an Amazon team hears about a tournament it tends to take their whole village with them, setting up a makeshift new village on the outskirts of the tournament site. Furthermore, most teams are followed wherever they go by their fans, drooling, idiotic men who offer to do the bidding of the Amazons.

While Amazon teams are pretty thin on the ground, having only recently taken up the sport, there have been a few teams that have made it to the Majors, and while none of them has yet reached a final, it should only be a matter of time before an Amazon team takes a Cup. Amazons are gifted with natural grace and dexterity and opponents often find themselves g(r)asping at thin air where an Amazon just was. The blitzers are almost impossible to take down and have left many an opposing coach in tears as his carefully constructed game plans (or not as may be the case for Goblins) are left in tatter by an Amazon blitzer, gracefully dodging between staring players, kicking the ball carrier in the proverbial coconuts and waltzing into the end zone. More than one team has regretted calling an Amazon team 'Jist wimmun'.

FAMOUS AMAZON TEAMS

Jlaxonkill Jaguars: The Jaguars are the Amazons premier team after coming close to the Blood Bowl final two years ago. Led by their quartet of blitzers, the B'heverlay sisters, the Jags are certainly proving to be capable of taking on any of the big teams as Prince Moranion found out when he took the infamous 'Quadruple Kneecap' from the sisters and found himself in the dugout for an extended period of time.

Tlax Warriors: The Warriors shocked the Blood Bowl world becoming the first team to win the Zlatlan Cup other than Sotek's Word back in 2491. They also shocked the world by becoming the first non-Lizardmen to discover the hidden city of Zlatlan. With a nice pot of gold from winning the tournament, the Warriors have invested heavily in future talent and are now looking to make a name for themselves on the Minor circuit with some good solid defensive play backed up by an excellent passing game, before breaking into, and hopefully winning a Major. Voted 'Team to watch' in 2503, the Warriors have a very bright future ahead of themselves.

NORSE BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Beer swilling, spear brandishing, polar bear wrestling lunatics, and that's the apothecaries! The actual players on a Norse team aren't much better either, drinking copious amounts of stomach stripping mead and working themselves into a murderous frenzy before the game even kicks off. And plenty of Norsemen have taken up the sport. Consider the situation from their point of view; the winter night is drawing in, and all you have to look forward to is another epic tale from the bard about guys hacking some other guys to bits over a reindeer and then going to Valhalla and hacking each other to bits for even less cause. Then you hear that the Arctic Cragspiders are playing three successive tournaments in the far-off and glamorous lands of Lustria, Estalia and Brettonia. What would you do? You'd be making ready your traveling gear (a change of clothing for the huskies and a barrel of beer) and report for squad duty.

The main players of the Norse teams come from the villages of Norsca, and while the players may not be as heavily armoured as those on other teams, they are tougher than an old pair of hobnail boots and can stay upright after taking the most vicious of blocks. The runners are often drawn from the Huscarls of the village, warriors with no fear, who defend the homesteads against man and beast and take the same attitude onto the pitch. Then there are the berserkers. Well in advance of a match the berserkers will often start quaffing flagons of ale before whipping themselves into a frenzy and storming onto the pitch to get to the opponents. Many coaches have watched their star players launched off the pitch and into the crowd when a three hundred pound berserker charged into him, much to the fans delight.

Recently, Norse teams have been fielding Snow Trolls and Ulfwerener to enhance their ability to create carnage on the pitch. Snow Trolls (often known to the locals as Yhettees) exude a dangerous aura of cold that has inflicted many an opposing catcher waiting for a pass with frostbite. While they are normally reclusive creatures, the Norse have gained the trust (with a few barrels of beer) of these massive Trolls. The Ulfwerener are ferocious shape changing wolf men from the dark forests of Norsca, the strength and raw ferocity of these players has lead to more than one team being decimated.

FAMOUS NORSE TEAMS

Norsca Rampagers: Formerly known as the Vynheim Valkyries, the Rampagers have won the Blood Bowl and been runners up twice each. A few years ago however, they were forced to change their team-name from the Valkyries and go into hiding after they pillaged and burned down the factory and kidnapped the entire board of directors of their owning company - Skalgrimm & Holst when the company withdrew their sponsorship!



Arctic Cragspiders: The Cragspiders are twelve time winners of the Chaos Cup. The last time was in 2486 when they beat the Oldheim Ogres. The star player of that day was Snow Troll, Icepelt Hammerblow, who burst open the front line of the Ogres allowing a runner to score the winning touchdown before Icepelt was crushed in an all mighty pile on in the last remaining seconds. However, as the Ogres were removed from the pile, a blasted and crushed body of Icepelt stood up, brushed himself off and walked away to collect the Chaos Cup with a very big grin on his face. To this day, Icepelt has shrugged off each and every block, chainsaw, bomb and deathroller that appeared to have gotten the better of him while hiring himself out to every Norse team willing to pay for the huge amount of ale he desires.

LIZARDMAN BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

As the sun fell on the Slann empire, the ancient race withdrew to the temples of Lustria to watch mankind and the new races slowly take over the world. Once proud masters of the game of Blood Bowl many thousands of years ago, the Slann no longer wished to be associated with the barbaric people that now built homes and cities in the once empty lands of the Old World. A small group of Slann stayed in the Old World however to watch the new races. Time progressed, and the Slann watched as the long forgotten game of Blood Bowl was re-discovered. Then, with the formation of the NAF the Slann based in the Old World even took up the ancient armour and joined in once more.



However, back in Lustria the game had been forgotten, and the Slann grew old and fat without exercise as the servants of the Slann, the Lizardmen, worked on the temples and catered to the needs of their masters. One night in the year 2300, a shaman from the smallest of the Lizardmen race, the Skinks, had a vision. He saw a group of Lizardmen on a field of battle, dressed in armour, protecting an inflated pigs bladder from an equal number of the hated Skaven. Once the Lizardmen had gotten the bladder to the opposite end of the field they were rewarded with a sign from the god Sotek. As the Shaman came back to the physical world, he realised he had seen something important and immediately set about explaining his vision to the other shamans. Excited about the vision the Lizardmen organised teams from various spawnings to compete for the glory of Sotek and for the eventual coming of the other races to defeat them in this glorious game.

As the game of Blood Bowl was almost ruined when the NAF collapsed in 2489, the Lustria Croakers Slann team was recalled to Lustria (Slann teams have only played during one season since 2489 to stay in practice and actually won the 2501 Chaos Cup and Spike! Magazine Trophy). When the Croakers arrived in Lustria, they witnessed the Lizardmen playing a variant of Blood Bowl. With the blessings of the elder Slann, many of the Croakers team became coaches and assistant coaches and trained the Lizardmen on the current rules of Old World Blood Bowl. They also instructed the Lizardmen to go forth and teach the weak, young races that while the Slann are gone (for now) from the pitch, the Lizardmen are now the superior race by destroying them at Blood Bowl, a game they believe is their own.

Lizardmen teams are very difficult to play against. They have exceptionally fast players in the Skinks, who are able to dodge and weave through any defence, while the Saurus and Kroxigor are the fastest moving 'hitters' in the game. Not many teams can withstand an organised blitz by a Saurus front line. The great power and speed of the Lizardmen however, is offset by a lack in ball handling and this has just stopped the Lizardmen from dominating the sport.

FAMOUS LIZARDMEN TEAMS

Sotek's Word: Sotek's Word, won the Zlatlan Cup a record ninety seven years in a row. While the team claims it was through tactical brilliance and skillful play, many analysts argue that the Word were helped to the trophy by the fact that they were the only ones who knew where the hidden city of Zlatlan was until the Amazons discovered it (and promptly thrashed Sotek's Word in the final that year).

CHAOS DWARF BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

It is not only man that can be corrupted and twisted by the taint of chaos. A long time ago, in the distant past some Dwarfs moved northwards into the Great Skull Lands and then south along the Mountains of Mourn. These explorers were undoubtedly the ancestors of the Chaos Dwarfs. The great influx of Chaos has since worked terrifying changes on their bodies and souls, turning them into evil, self-centered creatures. In one way, however, they haven't changed at all - Chaos Dwarfs still love playing Blood Bowl.

Chaos Dwarfs worship the great bull god - Hashut. Many believe he is a minor chaos power, others believe he is a corrupted Dwarven god. Whatever his origins, though, the Chaos Dwarfs are his favourite worshipers. The greatest blessing Hashut can bestow on his followers is the form of the bull as Dwarven bodies are twisted and ripped open to form the fearsome Bull Centaurs or to become a terrifying Minotaur, both of which are frequently seen on the Chaos Dwarf teams. It is not unknown for those Dwarfs or Minotaurs who appease Hashut to find themselves waking up with tentacles, extra arms or heads. This never happens to the Bull Centaurs, though, as Hashut considers this form already his ultimate blessing.

As Chaos Dwarfs are not very numerous so they make use of Hobgoblin slaves to fill out their teams. These nasty creatures are taller than normal Goblins, with thin and sneaky features. Although Chaos Dwarfs don't really trust hobgoblins very much, having a sneaky, evil git in your team can come in handy for those plays which require a bit more dexterity and speed.



Under the years of the NAF, Chaos Dwarf teams didn't feature in the league and they were often found in the minor competitions that were running throughout the Old World. However, with the collapse of the NAF, the Chaos Dwarfs took to the open style favourably and have come close to winning majors on a few occasions. A Chaos Dwarf team even made it into the Blood Bowl final a couple of years back! With Bull Centaurs and Minotaurs featuring more commonly on the teams, and with the dangerous mutations of the Chaos Dwarfs and the sneakiness of the Hobgoblins, the future is looking bright for those following Hashut.

FAMOUS CHAOS DWARF TEAMS

Zharr-Naggrund Ziggurats: Based in the capital of the Chaos Dwarf lands, the Ziggurats are probably the top Chaos Dwarf team on the open circuit. Credited with inventing the 'Blunderbuss Pass' where a Chaos Dwarf with a blunderbuss jams the ball into the barrel and fires it into the sky hopefully resulting in the ball landing on or near a hobgoblin who can catch or retrieve it and run in for a touchdown.

Scarfaced Scavengers: The Scavengers were based in the old Worlds-Edge Superleague and until recently actually featured a Troll on the side. The Scavengers were notorious for strapping dynamite and kegs of gunpowder onto the Troll and sending him running down into the opposing half where he'd detonate himself to the glee of the fans as they were covered in bits of Troll (which would then proceed to regenerate) and causing a huge amount of detestation to the opponents. This tactic was eventually outlawed a couple of seasons back by the Blood Bowl Regulations Crafters and Trolls have not been featured on a Chaos Dwarf team ever since.

FAMOUS CHAOS TEAM PROFILE: THE CHAOS ALL-STARS

Team Colours: Red and green flames

Owner: Prince Dorian the Lost

Head Coach: Snake Sanders

Players: Marauders and various renegade doomed warriors and creatures from other races and places



As most folk know, the world is a very strange place, full to the brim with weird and wonderful things. Around the turn of the century, some of the weird and wonderful things decided to form a Blood Bowl team. The Chaos All-Stars are the result. They are owned by thrice-damned Prince Dorian, the legendary heir to several ancient kingdoms who has thrown it all away and made a pact with his devilish Chaos gods to run a Blood Bowl team for them. The team is a haven for many renegades and outcasts from all walks of the Old World, as well as a great many Chaos creatures like Ogres, Minotaurs, and Trolls. Opponents occasionally have trouble coping with the wild magic that infests games featuring the All-Stars, but since it is officially a natural phenomenon nothing can be done about it; players just have to learn how to deal with balls that grow razor sharp teeth and try to eat their hand or areas of pitch turning to quicksand at a moment's notice!

2402 The Chaos All-Stars are formed through Dorian's eldritch daemon-pact, and due to a strange quirk in the time continuum manage to win the Chaos Cup two years running five years earlier.

2420 Owing to one of the Elder Demigods casting the wrong spell at a crucial moment, the entire team is transported to another plane ten minutes after winning the Chaos Cup for the fifth time. Nine years pass before the Chaos All-stars manage to return to this world.

2467 Under the very charismatic captaincy of skilled Snakeman V'hnn Qlss Zzchtrr (known to Old World commentators as 'Snakey'), the All-Stars beat, and then eat, the much-fancied Shiretown Stuffers to take Blood Bowl VII. In disgust, many Halfling teams have boycotted their games ever since, forcing fans to find another half-time snack.

2497 After leading the All-Stars to four straight years of victories at the Majors including three consecutive Chaos Cup titles, Morg 'n' Thorg leaves the team to turn freelance.

Now The Chaos All-Stars have always had this 'habit' of eating the head coach to celebrate victory or in retaliation for a loss. To combat the resulting lack of leadership, Prince Dorian has hired former Chaos All-Stars star player Snake Sanders who had gained a hypnotic gaze and the ability to re-grow his entire body from the smallest piece as gifts from previous Chaos Cup championships. Experts believe that Sanders' coaching skills along with his abilities to mesmerize players with post-hypnotic suggestions and to survive being eaten each game by cutting off his own finger before the game ends means the All-Stars finally have a coach that could lead them to another Blood Bowl trophy.

Team Honours: Blood Bowl winners 2467 (VII); Chaos Cup winners 2397-98, 2409, 2419-20, 2434, 2436, 2449, 2468, 2471, 2487, 2495-97; Dungeonbowl winners 2489, 2492-93; Spike! Magazine Trophy winners 2493

Hall of Fame: Duke Luthor von Hawkfire, Morg 'n' Thorg, V'hnn Qlss 'Snakey' Zzchtrr

Spike! Magazine Rating: 270 points

CHAOS AND NURGLE BLOOD BOWL TEAMS

Deep within the dark forests of the Old World, far off the beaten tracks used by more civilized folk, lurk the dreaded Beastmen of Chaos. These terrible creatures are half beast and half man, the twisted descendants of people and animals mutated by the power of the Chaos Gods. Even more powerful than the Beastmen are the Chaos Warriors. These once human champions have sold their souls in return for superhuman strength. Successful Chaos Warriors will often be rewarded with other gifts in the form of magical abilities and terrible physical mutations such as horns, extra limbs or crab-like claws. These followers of Chaos often combine to form a frighteningly effective Blood Bowl team.



Most Chaos teams are not noted for the subtlety or marginality of their game play. A simple drive up the middle of the pitch, maiming and injuring as many opposing players as possible, is about the limit of the typical Chaos team's game plan – and by Nuffle, does it work!

However, as random as mutations seem to be on a Chaos team, there have been many Chaos teams that have used the gifts of their patrons for such uses as 'passing' the ball and 'catching' it and many opponents have been caught unawares by a Chaos team able to throw (and catch) the ball.

There are those Chaos teams that have chosen a path of decay and disease, these are the followers of Nurgle, a giant plague ridden, maggot filled Chaos god of pestilence that delights in creating all manner of disease to spread. Nurgle is a huge fan of Blood Bowl. On more than one occasion he has been seen watching a game, with a giant bag of Pop Khorne to nibble on, as his favourite team, the Nurgle's Rotters, infest the pitch.

Whatever your flavour of Chaos God however, there are plenty of Chaotic teams to go around featuring patronage from one of the four major Gods. You'll often find Beastmen players that follow Slaanesh playing a running game as they weave between the opposition or you may even find a Tzeentchian Chaos Warrior with a great throwing arm - Von Hawkfire of the All-Stars was a perfect example of such a player with his ability to turn a thrown ball into a grand piano as it was about to be intercepted. Often the most dangerous Chaos teams are those that feature players from all Chaos Gods, and as the Chaos All-Stars have shown, when you have four Gods supporting you, 'chance' tends to work in your favour.

FAMOUS NURGLE TEAMS

Nurgle's Rotters: The first Nurgle Chaos team, the Nurgle's Rotters, was created by Nurgle not only to win games and provide himself with some entertainment, but to act as a recruiting drive to find more followers as well. And their recruitment method is pretty effective: they infect their opponents with the terrible disease Nurgle's Rot that is always fatal sooner more often than later. As a result, it is not uncommon for opponents to refuse to take the pitch against the Rotters. In fact, in 2468 so many teams refused to play the Rotters that they won the Blood Bowl championship. The Rotters are fortunate that they can easily bring on new players for the team. The ones already on the team are usually fairly rotten, and all the bumps and bashes during a typical game don't help. A Rotters player can often quite literally go to pieces from a successful hit by an opponent, as the Rot really sets in.

FAMOUS CHAOS TEAMS

Khorne's Killers: Considered by many to be the archetypal Chaos Blood Bowl team, this collection of homicidal (and elficidal, dwarficidal, orcidicidal - in fact everythingicidal!) maniacs are the terror of the Blood Bowl pitch. Their bloodthirsty attitude means that they rarely worry about minor things like picking up the ball and scoring - not while there are any players left in the opposing team, anyway! They either win by lots of lose by lots.