

# The Thousand Losses Playbook

- A general guide on how to play Blood Bowl -

1. Edition (V. 0997 Beta)

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This book discusses the board game Blood Bowl. Blood Bowl is a Specialist Games Product of the company Games Workshop, Ltd.. As of this month, the game and its materials are no longer offered on their website. As far as I know, they still hold the intellectual property rights for the game.

## Preamble

It is said that only those who have experienced failure know how to learn from their mistakes. I have failed plenty in this game. Therefore I am uniquely qualified to present to you the first general playbook of Blood Bowl.

So far, most guides are either short, basic or have been oriented on race. If you look for these things, I recommend the help section on fumbbl.com or any other of the great info sites across the internet. The problem I found when talking to beginners: If you want to grasp the real spirit of this game you can't bother yourself with racial preconception. Every team takes a unique development path and depending on where it goes, what skills and stats are chosen, an opponent needs to be addressed differently.

This book tries to outline strategy based on dynamics and addresses racial differences when they come up.

Blood Bowl is a game of art, fluff, luck just as much as it is of skill. Peoples opinions collide about how it should be played and how it would be played best. At some points I might actually add sources of opinions but that hasn't really been a priority yet. This book still attempts to capture at least briefly the differing opinions that have been vocal over the last years. It does however, not claim to be complete.

The reason why I chose to start this as a solo-project was to create a coherent text. A task that couldn't be done by having different people address offense and defense, setups, skilling, odds and so on without its respective context.

By putting all these things together, people should have a chance to really advance themselves in the game.

Although this is not the way people suggest to do that, there are passages I explicitly state to be my opinion. Obviously the text as a whole is the authors opinion, yet I believe it is important to convey my feelings about certain aspects of the game thoroughly enough to give the reader a chance to see where I'm coming from and where might be greater dissent. This is to not simply provide a set of rules but a work of strong founded opinion. The reader however should have a chance to form and retain his own opinion on all the matters discussed.

This guide does not need to be read as a whole, it is supposed to give answers to whoever has a problem with a certain aspect of the game to find a solution in here.

Now that a ground work is done, I hope other people will be interested in adding passages or differing opinions by the time of the release of the second edition of this work.  
I am opting to *not* make this open source because I don't want the content to get too fractured.

Yet if you feel like you want to correct my sluggish English and over edit the text, of course I'll send you a copy and you are more than welcome to it.

Special thanks to Kalimar who allowed me to use pictures of the Fantasy Football Client as a basis for this work.

This book is made in honor to Fumbbl but is free to read for all natural persons who love the game of Blood Bowl.

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# I. Probabilities

Blood Bowl can be played simply on emphasis and a coach with plenty of experience can obviously get pretty good at it. However the idea of teaching something is the idea to circumvent the process of trial and error and to let you succeed right away without trying first.

To be able to do that and also become a really good coach understanding probabilities is critical. Because this is a guide and this is probably nowhere else explained like this, I'll try to teach you the actual math behind Blood Bowl teach you the concept of probabilities altogether.

We begin with basic school math you might have forgotten about and then work our way forward to how to make quick calculations in your head based on the probability dynamics present in the game.

If you do know about probability but have difficulties to apply them to Blood Bowl I recommend skipping the basic parts and maybe start with NR. 3 or 4.

## 1. Very basic

Most of the odds you are dealing with are pretty simple, related to d6.

In dices we assume the outcome of every roll to be equally likely. In case of a d6 the possible outcomes are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. There are six possible outcomes each has a chance of 1/6.

## 2. Basic

The same applies to the block dice, they have Skull, Both down, Push, Push, Defender Stumbles, Defender Down. Each has a probability of 1/6. Obviously the probability to get either of the two push results is 2/6 which equates 1/3.

The reason why I write 2/6 instead of 1/3 is because we want probabilities we can compare, we don't really want to calculate the least common multiple but rather use a mid high multiple that is easy to calculate and often used in Blood Bowl.

Because the majority of more complex actions requires 2 dice, I like to calculate everything in a 36 dividend, rather than a 6 dividend. For the case of single die actions that would mean we have to multiply everything with 6 to get a 36 dividend. For example  $1/6 = 6/36$ . Or:  $2/6 = 12/36$ . So a push result on a d6 equates a 12/36 chance.

## 3. 2 Dice Basics

When dealing with 1d6 rolls you may have noticed how I just added the probabilities of the two 1/6 push chances together to get a 2/6 chance but you can't just add the odds you get from 2 different dice, because they don't exist in a universe where only 6 possible outcomes exist., there are now 36 possible outcomes. It's an entirely different reality and you have to be aware of that reality if you want to calculate odds properly.

It's actually pretty simple, you get the foundation of every probability when you just lay the possible outcomes down. For 2 d6 those are:

11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16,  
21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26,  
31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36,  
41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46,  
51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56,  
61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66

In other words it's six times six possible outcomes now. The designers made a conscious choice to make us add the eyes of the rolls together. Some different eyes added together will produce the

same result. For example 46 equates 64 equates 55.

What is important here is that you understand that you don't live in a world of 12 possible outcomes but in a world of 36.

Because a very high result with 2 dice requires for both dice to be very high while a middle result could have one of the two dice to be low and one of the two dice to be high in different variations a very high result is very unlikely. The same applies to a very low result. For instance getting an added result of 12 can only be archived by getting the 66 on the scale of possible outcomes. Ie: The probability to roll a 12 is 1/36.

For the added result of 11 there are two variants: The 56 result and the 65 result. Two results equate a 2/36 chance.

For the added result of 10 there are 3 variants as mentioned above. That would equate a 3/36 chance.

For the added result of 9 there are 4 variants with 45, 54, 63 and 36.

8 has 5 variants and 7 the most middle added number finally climaxes with 6 possible variations in 16, 61, 25, 52, 34, 43. The 7 is special because it is also the one number on a 2dice roll that is equally likely to get to any roll made with a single d6.

Unfortunate for anyone who likes to rely on constant patterns, when we move away from the middle there aren't that many variations anymore that can form the lower numbers mirroring the effects of high numbers, the added number of 6 has only 5 possible variants, 5 has 4 variants, 4 has 3, 3 has 2 variants and 2 has only 1 variant, the double 1.

## **4. Applying 2d6 to Blood Bowl**

Fortunately there is a pattern for us that is very easy to spot. With every number closer to the middle the next roll is more likely by +1. This helps us greatly if we want to compare the effects a change in the armor or the injury roll has for example.

Because the injury roll is static lets have a look at what odds we are dealing with here:

To cause an injury we need to roll a 10+ on the injury roll. That equates the possible outcomes to get the added result of either a 12, 11 or 10.

All we have to do now is to add the odds for those different outcomes together. Because they all are happening as part of the same possible 36 outcomes we look at it and get:

$1(\text{result 12}) + 2(\text{result 11}) + 3(\text{result 10}) = 6$  out of 36 outcomes. In other words there are 6/36 variants to get a 10+.

Now it's pretty simple from here to figure out the chance for a KO, a 8+ roll. We just have to continue adding numbers down the line:  $1+2+3+4+5= 15$ . (1+2+3 represents here the chance for a 10+ result, the outcome 9 is represented by adding 4 more variants, the outcome 8 is represented by adding the +5 more variants in the end. )

So there are 15 out of 36 results to get you on 8 or above equating a 15/36 chance. In comparison a 50% chance would equate 18/36.

Rolling a 7+ has 21/36 variants but be careful from there because now you have to add lower numbers to the equation again.

With 6+ 26/36, 5+ 30/36, 4+ 33/36 and so on.

How do single dice rolls with a Re-Roll equate to 2 dice rolls?

Those are pretty much the same. You could take the chart of 36 different outcomes and just count the outcomes that would make you succeed a roll and you would have an accurate result.

But it's easier to go on about it differently.

Generally we want for our brain as little work as possible. That's why when we have 2 dice we will only look at the first dice result and see if it gives us the desired outcome we want. A 2+ roll has 5 possible outcomes that make it succeed. a 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 equating 5/6 or also 30/36 if you multiply it with six on both sides.

So when I have to make a 2+ roll I will first calculate my chance for making the first roll, which is 5/6 and tell myself: Well, if this roll succeeds, everything will be fine. It doesn't matter how the second roll goes, or to be precise in 100% of the possible results of the second roll the entire result will still be successful.

However there is also a chance I won't succeed the first time So I first look at the likeliness for this to happen, which is 1/6, ie. What's left on the d6 after the other 5/6 are used up. Now I look at my second roll and ask myself: How likely is it to succeed this time? It's 5/6 again but only for the case of the 1/6 failure in the first roll.

So I multiply those odds:  $5/6 * 1/6 = 5/36$

Now I have the scenario of 30/36 outcomes to succeed on the first roll and the scenario out of the remaining six outcomes with 5 give me a success.

I add them together and get a total chance of 35/36., without having to count everything on the formula sheet.

Now those 35/36 are a lot better odds than 30/36 as you can probably guess but in cases like these there is an even easier way to figure the odds out. Rather than looking at the single roll you need to succeed at it's always easier to look at a row of actions which ALL need to succeed/fail to get a desired outcome. In other words in this case where I have to succeed either 5+ roll to make it, I have conversely to fail every single time to fail it altogether.

Now that's simple. The chance for the first roll to fail is 1/6 AND the chance for the second roll to fail is 1/6. A little mind helper says: AND means you multiply, OR means you add. This applies to consecutive dice rolls you have to make anyways.

Making 1/6 AND 1/6 would be then  $1/6 * 1/6 = 1/36$ . Ie: The first roll needs to fail and in this case the second roll needs to fail and that's the only case there is. There is no other case where it would turn out like this too.

If you know the fail chance you always also know the success chance (unless some sort of tie is possible). Ie. If 1/36 is the fail chance, 35/36 has to be the success chance or to write it mathematically: 1 is 100% or  $36/36$ .  $36/36 - 1/36 = 35/36$ .

Because the re-roll in Blood Bowl is generally the same as the initial roll you usually can just square them to get a fail chance.

For example:

2+ re-roll →  $1/6$  squared =  $1/36$  -

3+ re-roll →  $2/6$  squared =  $4/36$

4+ re-roll →  $3/6$  squared =  $9/36$

5+ re-roll →  $4/6$  squared =  $16/36$

6+ re-roll →  $5/6$  squared =  $25/36$

The counter chance in those cases you get by simply subtracting those numbers from  $36/36$ .

## 5. Comparing Odds

Now here we are really at the essence of why understanding all those odds is necessary.

You could calculate the odds in decimal numbers but they are no good for you that way because you need a calculator to do it or at least time. But you don't have that in a game, you don't want to have all those odds in your head either, so the easiest way is really to be able to calculate them quickly to be able to compare them.

Just because you know the likeliness of some actions doesn't help you anything. It only helps you if you know whether or not it is more likely than another alternative action.

A common example is the question what is better: To be able to re-roll a roll or to get +1 on the result. (Accurate or Pass dilemma). The truth is: The better odds give you a better chance on the re-roll but they are less likely to come in effect. So lets have a look.

A 2+ roll is  $5/6 = 30/36$ . A 3+ re-roll roll is the counter chance of  $4/36 \rightarrow 32/36$ . Now that's a pretty neat extra 2 out of 6 36ses there.

$3+ \rightarrow 4/6 \rightarrow \mathbf{24/36}$  compared to  $4+ \text{ RR} \rightarrow \text{CC } 9/36 \rightarrow \mathbf{27/36}$ . We see again the re-roll chance is a little better, shows us just how much a Re-Roll really is worth.

$4+ \rightarrow 3/6 \rightarrow \mathbf{18/36}$  compared to  $5+ \text{ RR} \rightarrow \text{CC } 15/36 \rightarrow \mathbf{21/36}$

$5+ \rightarrow 2/6 \rightarrow \mathbf{12/36}$  compared to  $6+ \text{ RR} \rightarrow \text{CC } 25/35 \rightarrow \mathbf{11/36}$ . Here you see a breaking point from what you have seen before, because the  $6+$  roll with only half the base chance of the  $5+$  roll is just too unlikely to even the odds even with a Re-Roll.

Now looking at this you might be tempted to always take the re-roll skill over the  $+1$  skill but that would often be a mistake. The problem is that, while most of these odds are pretty decent, in Blood Bowl we have to rely on our rolls as good as possible. A Re-Roll skill is better if you don't have team Re-Rolls at your disposal to do the same thing. But almost all rolls in Blood Bowl are of critical importance. The advantage of a  $+1$  skill is that it works in addition to a possible team re-roll, giving you combined a much better effect. For instance the  $35/36$  chance of a  $2+$  re-roll roll rather than an unreliable  $32/36$  chance  $3+$  re-roll roll (Of course because you can only use it once per turn that isn't entirely true but that would go out of hand to explain that. Lets just say you don't fail as much as you think. But if you do you should better have a plan.)

The re-roll skills are good but dead ends, you get the maximum out, you can get.. It means you plan to burn through your Re-Rolls and will be short handed anyways. (which is fine, just keep the dilemma in mind.)

## **6. Block Dice**

As mentioned in the beginning block dice are just some normal dice with a different set of symbols. There could be numbers on them it wouldn't make a difference. Because the regular case is that you can choose among 2 block dice. It requires a moment of thought how this can be translated into odds. The easiest way is to do it the same way you would look at a roll you can re-roll. In other words you look at the first dice result and you have two scenarios: Either it gives you the desired outcome or it doesn't. Then you look at the second d6. Assuming you aren't greedy and don't target the ball-carrier your main goal on a block will be not to cause a turnover for yourself. A pow is nice but seriously there is lots you can do later if you just don't get knocked down yourself. You get knocked down means it's over.

There are generally two results that knock you down which are the skull and the both down result, meaning an unskilled player fails  $2/6$  of his 1 dice rolls, or every  $3^{\text{rd}}$  roll if you prefer that. With 2 dice that means we have an equal fail chance to a  $3+$  re-roll with  $4/36$  scenarios that will go south. In comparison, if you get the Block/Wrestle skill, a Both Down will be harmless to you. Instead of a  $2/6$  fail chance per dice it's now a  $1/6$  chance. That means just by using Block you have doubled your chances of success. If you translate this to two dice your fail chance is  $1/36$  now instead of  $4/36$ . You now have quadrupled your chances. You see how that equates to a  $2+$  roll instead of a  $3+$  roll.

An interesting implication we can learn from this is that the Block skill equates in fact to AG+, while  $+ST$  equates to having a Re-Roll. But because we usually can get two dice by just using assists and don't really need the extra strength, Block is more valuable than  $+ST$ .

## **7. Calculating Rows of Actions**

Being able to look at a single roll and tell what is more likely is a good first step but don't neglect your intuition especially if more throws are involved. There are often cases where you have to make only one hard roll to get something. Alternatively you could make a mediocre difficult roll but you have to make a lot of high success chance rolls to get there. If you calculate odds here to schematically neglecting the low risk actions you might fail to see that there lies a much better shot with the one risky action.

To tell the truth you are still mostly better off taking the many rolls because if you have a turnover half through your turn that's still better than if you go on all or nothing and fail your first action. The stuff we are doing now you mostly be not able to calculate in your head. But seeing how it works might help you to estimate your chances roughly or allow you to calculate certain odds in advance if you wish so. Anyhow here is how you calculate Rows of Actions.

You already possess all the tools to do that. The AND OR principle is the key here (In case of AND you multiply, in case of OR you add.).

Let's say you want to calculate a dodge (3+), two GFI and a Blitz (2d with Block skill).

We would go on about this like that:

You have to succeed:

A dodge AND a GFI AND a GFI AND a block-throw OR a block-throw

$$\frac{2}{3} * \frac{5}{6} * \frac{5}{6} * (\frac{5}{6} + (\frac{1}{6} * \frac{5}{6}))$$

Now a couple of things need to be said to this. The  $\frac{2}{3}$  chance is the 3+ dodge. I would have described this before as  $\frac{4}{6}$  but if you actually want to multiply probabilities you are still better off finding the least common multiple ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ). The two  $\frac{5}{6}$  are the GFI, easy to grasp. In the breaks we have  $\frac{5}{6}$  for the first block. Now I said we add the second block like stated within the AND OR principle. But you see that that isn't exactly right, because I write there  $\frac{1}{6} * \frac{5}{6}$  instead of just  $\frac{5}{6}$ . I explained this before. If you add probabilities you can only add for the second scenario where the first scenario didn't take place. The first scenario is  $\frac{5}{6}$  here for you to not turnover on the block. The counter chance for that is  $\frac{1}{6}$  that you fail and this is what you multiply to the second block ( $\frac{5}{6}$ ) again. Hope you can follow me there. In short it means: You can look at the two dice rolls as one even with entirely own probability within the events of OR statements.

That would look like this:

$$\frac{2}{3} * \frac{5}{6} * \frac{5}{6} * 35/36$$

Pretty likely that block not to screw you, eh? If we had Re-Rolls that would be the point where we would have to apply them, but more about that in a minute.

Now we won't be able to make this that much easier for us so lets grab a calculator and we roughly get to a 45% (0.45) chance of success. We can easily translate this into 36ses by just multiplying it with 36 and we get:  $16.2/36$ , an easy number to compare.

Generally it isn't really important to you how likely a whole row of actions is, it is only important whether or not it is more or less likely than another row of actions. Therefore it is advisable to just ignore any action you would do in either scenario.

## **8. Calculating Rows with Team-Re-Rolls**

Now taking rolls out of the equation doesn't really work when team Re-Rolls are involved. In fact you are far off what the average person can do in the head in a matter of seconds. Well it's possible to do but why try so hard, right? Math is supposed to make things easier, not more complicated.

However if you wanted to calculate stuff, here is how you would do it:

Let's have a look at our example from before:

a dodge (3+), two GFI and a Blitz (2d with Block skill).

$$\frac{2}{3} * \frac{5}{6} * \frac{5}{6} * 35/36$$

You could apply a team re-roll to any of those four rolls if they were to fail. So this is how we go on about it. We know already the variant written up there gives us the 45% chance we will definitely succeed even without the re-roll. Now we add a bunch of other scenarios.

The entire combined odds would look like this.

(Odds for everything to go right) AND (only Dodge needs to be re-rolled) AND (only first GFI needs to be re-rolled) AND (only second GFI needs to be re-rolled) AND (Blitz needs to be re-rolled)

These are the four extra scenarios that can happen. Now if we look at the numbers it would look

like this:

All goes right::  $2/3 * 5/6 * 5/6 * 35/36$

+

Dodge fails:  $(1/3 * 2/3) * 5/6 * 5/6 * 35/36$

+

1<sup>st</sup> GFI fails:  $2/3 * (1/6 * 5/6) * 5/6 * 35/36$

+

2<sup>nd</sup> GFI fails:  $2/3 * 5/6 * (1/6 * 5/6) * 35/36$

+

Blitz fails:  $2/3 * 5/6 * 5/6 * (1/36 * 35/36)$

=

Probability to succeed with a team re-roll

However we are in luck. Because we have a common base chance that is available in all scenarios and the only thing that changes is the fail-chance within it we get this simple formula

$2/3 * 25/36 * 35/36 (1 + 1/3 + 1/6 + 1/6 + 1/36)$

Or to write it abstract:

$P(\text{Base Chance}) * (P(\text{All goes right} = 1) + P(\text{Dodge fails}) + P(\text{1}^{\text{st}} \text{ GFI fails}) + P(\text{2}^{\text{nd}} \text{ GFI fails}) + P(\text{Blitz fails}))$

And you get:

$2/3 * 25/36 * 35/36 * 61/36 = 76.27\% = 27.5/36$

P in this context means basically: Probability of (action).

Anyways, I tried to explain it easy as I could. If you could grasp the concept to this point you have most of the necessary understand about chances you need for this game. Anyhow all things I'm going to teach you about it. ☺

## 9. Order of Actions

Every new coach to the game of Blood Bowl gets taught to start with the most likely actions and then to proceed to the less likely ones. That is also one of the main premises of this guide. There are in fact matters that are more important than following this path but determining that will be part of the strategy part. For the probability part let's assume that more likely is always better.

Because you already know the basics it is time to give you a sum up of all the odds you are probably going to deal with a lot.

Fail chances:

|                                  |                 |              |             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Six Dice Block (Block Skill)     | $1/6^6$         | $1/46656 =$  | $0.0007/36$ |
| Quad Block (Block Skill)         | $1/6^4$         | $1/1296 =$   | $0.0278/36$ |
| Six Dice Block (no Block)        | $1/3^6$         | $1/729 =$    | $0.049/36$  |
| Three Dice Block (Block Skill)   | $1/6^3$         | $1/216 =$    | $0.1667/36$ |
| Quad Block (no Block)            | $1/3^4$         | $1/81 =$     | $0.444/36$  |
| 2+ with RR    2 Dice Block       | $1/6^2$         |              | $1/36$      |
| 3 dice Block (no Block)          | $1/3^3$         | $1/27 =$     | $1.33/36$   |
| -2 dice Block + RR (Block skill) | $(1-(5/6)^2)^2$ | $121/1269 =$ | $3.43/36$   |
| 3+ with RR    2 dice Block       | $1/3^2$         | $1/9 =$      | $4/36$      |
| 2+    1 dice block (with Block)  | $1/6^1$         | $1/6$        | $6/36$      |
| 4+ with RR                       | $1/2^2$         | $1/4 =$      | $9/36$      |
| -2 dice block (with Block)       | $1-(5/6)^2$     |              | $11/36$     |
| 3+    1 dice Block               | $1/3^1$         | $1/3$        | $12/36$     |
| 5+ with RR                       | $2/3^2$         | $4/9$        | $16/36$     |
| 4+                               | $1/2^1$         | $1/2$        | $18/36$     |

| -2 dice Block (no Block) | $1 - (2/3)^2$ | $5/9$ | $20/36$ |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------|---------|
| 5+                       | $2/3^1$       | $2/3$ | $24/36$ |
| 6+ with RR               | $5/6^2$       |       | $25/36$ |
| 6+                       | $5/6^1$       | $5/6$ | $30/36$ |

Deep Blue -> Save ; Light Blue -> As Save as it gets ; Green -> Reliable ; Yellow -> Plan for failure ; Ocher -> Unsafe ; Red -> Only attempt on non critical rolls ; Violet -> Don't

That's a pretty comprehensive compendium for you and I want to talk about some of the more obscure odds shown here later but first I want to show you how easy it is to figure all this stuff out. In fact I calculated these things while I was writing within split seconds.

Almost all these odds can be calculated by simple exponentiation as you can see. That's why they are so easy to calculate.

One of the few exceptions are the -2d blocks. What's happening here is basically two operations getting stapled:

Here I would calculate it by using this approach:

-2d Block +RR (Block skill)

$$(1 - 5/6 * 5/6) * (1 - 5/6 * 5/6)$$

In other words, instead of calculating the fail chance directly I'd look at the success chance first, because in a -2d roll need all dices to succeed. Therefore I don't look at the  $1/6$  chance but at  $5/6$  the counter-chance. This one I can square and get the success-chance but now that I have it for both rolls I need the fail chance back so I subtract the result from 1 again. The result I get is the fail chance for a -2dblock without a Re-Roll.

## 10. Passing

Lets look at some of the more complicated actions. I already explained how they can be calculated. Since passing is rather common I want to use them as a practical example.

You might actually want to skip this.

A pass involves between 2 and 3 rolls depending on if an interception is involved. Various skills can increase this number further.

When you do a pass you don't only have to consider failing the pass but also fumbling and dropping the ball right next to you. Since the game is centering around the ball, controlling the ball is very important. So you need to consider three things: Where could the ball land in case of a fumble, where could it land in case of an inaccurate pass and where could it land in case of an accurate pass. After looking at the possible different outcomes you will most likely realize that it is more advantageous for you to just stay where you are and to forget about the passing. Anyways, in case you don't. OK, as always we have to first look at every single case on its own and then if we like the cases we can add their probabilities together.

The ideal case is a complete success. On a simple pass that would be  $\text{Success}(\text{Pass}) = \text{Success}(\text{Throw}) * \text{Success}(\text{Catch})$ .

Lets assume we have an ag3+ player attempting an unmodified short pass. The player supposed to catch the ball has ag3 too. We have a Re-Roll.

Lets look at the variants that include a Re-Roll.

$\text{Success}(\text{All rolls}) \Rightarrow \text{Success}(\text{Throw} = 4+) = 1/2 * \text{Success}(\text{Catch} = 3+) = 2/3$

$+ \text{Success}(\text{Thro}3/4\text{w fails}) \Rightarrow \text{Failed}(\text{Throw} = 1/2) * \text{Success}(\text{Throw} = 1/2) * \text{Success}(\text{Catch} = 2/3)$

$+ \text{Success}(\text{Catch fails}) \Rightarrow \text{Success}(\text{Throw} = 1/2) * \text{Failed}(\text{Catch} = 1/3) * \text{Success}(\text{Catch} = 2/3)$

$= \text{Success}(\text{Pass with RR})$

$$\begin{aligned}
 & 1/3 (=12/36) \\
 & +1/6 (=6/36) \\
 & +1/9 (=4/36) \\
 & =22/36
 \end{aligned}$$

These calculations should be fairly easy to you at this point and I will no longer bore you with it. If you could follow me up to this point, well done. Otherwise you probably should check the beginners guide again where it is explained better at the end.

The counter probably of this wager we can see at 14/36 which lies somewhere between dark yellow and red on the scale I made above.

We automatically get the result for the variant without any re-roll from this which is the first calculation (Success (all rolls)) we made, which was 1/3. Meaning there is a stunning 2/3 fail-chance if you don't have a Re-Roll. That equates a 5+ without re-roll. If you keep checking the chart you can also see that you should rather utilize a Re-Roll on two more likely rolls than on just one hard roll. A 16/36 fail chance on re-rolling a 5+ instead of a 14/36 in this example.

The last notable variant here would be a variant where both rolls can be re-rolled (for example if your passer has Pass and the catcher has Catch) and you might wanna utilize those skills seeing yourself in a false safety. Success (Throw =  $\frac{3}{4}$ ) \* Success (Catch = 8/9) = 24/36 with a counter probability of 12/36. That's equating the chance of a 3+ roll without anything. It might work but wagering on it could still be fatal.

Adding the standard chance of a failed interception of 5/6 to the whole success string doesn't change much in the variants as this doesn't affect the other variants re-roll wise.

We would get some messy numbers. I'll take my calculator.

$$\text{Success(Throw and int)} = 10/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw with RR and Int)} = 110/216 = 55/108 = \sim 18.33/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw with Pass/Catch and Int)} = 20/36$$

I'll go on posting some numbers. Feel free to check them with your own skills that you have acquired now or just to stare at them.

Short Pass/Catch

$$\text{ag4}(3+)/\text{ag3}(3+) = 4/9 = 16/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw)} = 4/9 = 16/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw with RR)} = 40/54 = \sim 26.67/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw with Pass/Catch)} = 64/81 = \sim 28.4/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw and int)} = 20/59 = \sim 13.33/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw with RR and Int)} = 100/162 = \sim 22.22/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw with Pass/Catch and Int)} = 160/243 = \sim 23.703703/36$$

As you can see the addition of monotone fail chances like from an int or other unrelated rolls has an equalizing effect. The longer the row of actions you need to complete gets, the less relevant will the actual pass be, obviously.

I'll show this more vividly.

Short Pass/Catch

$$\text{Ag5}(2+)/\text{ag4}(2+) = 5/9 = 25/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw)} = 5/9 = 25/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw with RR)} = 100/108 = 25/27 = \sim 33.33/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw with Pass/Catch)} = 1225/1296 = \sim 34.0277/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw and int)} = 125/216 = \sim 20.833/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw with RR and Int)} = 125/162 = \sim 27.77/36$$

$$\text{Success(Throw with Pass/Catch and Int)} = 6125/7776 = \sim 28.356481481/36$$

$$\text{Success (throw with Pass)} = 35/36 * 5/6 = 175/216 = 28.167/36 \rightarrow \text{CC}(6.83/36)$$

$$\text{Success (Throw with Pass and 6+ Int)} = 35/36 * 25/36 = 875/1296 \rightarrow \text{CC}(421/1296) (11.6944/36)$$

## 11. Advanced Probability Table

| Fail Chances:                        | Calculation                   | Exact Result | In 36s    |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Six Dice Block (Block Skill)         | $(1/6)^6$                     | 1/46656      | 0.0007/36 |
| Quad Block (Block Skill)             | $(1/6)^4$                     | 1/1296       | 0.0278/36 |
| Six Dice Block (no Block)            | $(1/3)^6$                     | 1/729        | 0.049/36  |
| Three Dice Block (Block Skill)       | $(1/6)^3$                     | 1/216        | 0.1667/36 |
| Quad Block (no Block)                | $(1/3)^4$                     | 1/81         | 0.444/36  |
| 2+ with RR    2 Dice Block           | $(1/6)^2$                     |              | 1/36      |
| 3 dice Block (no Block)              | $(1/3)^3$                     | 1/27         | 1.33/36   |
| 2+2+Throw (Pass/Catch Skill)         | $1-(35/36)^2$                 | 71/1296      | 1.97/36   |
| 2+2+Throw (with RR)  2 GFI+RR        | $1-((5/6)^2(1+2(1/6)))$       | 2/27         | 2.67/36   |
| -2 dice Block + RR (Block skill)     | $(1-(5/6)^2)^2$               | 121/1269     | 3.43/36   |
| 3+ with RR    2 dice Block           | $(1/3)^2$                     | 1/9          | 4/36      |
| 2+2+2+ with RR                       | $1- ((5/6)^3+3*(1/6)(5/6)^3)$ | 19/144       | 4.75/36   |
| 2+    1 dice block (with Block)      | $(1/6)^1$                     | 1/6          | 6/36      |
| 2+2+ Throw (Pass Skill)              | $1-35/36*5/6$                 | 41/216       | 6.83/36   |
| 2+2+ Throw (Pass/Catch Skill/6+ int) | $1-(35/36)^2*5/6$             | 1651/7776    | 7.64/36   |
| 4+ with RR                           | $(1/2)^2$                     | 1/4 =        | 9/36      |
| -2 dice block (with Block)  2 GFI    | $1-(5/6)^2$                   |              | 11/36     |
| 2+2+ Throw (Pass skill and 6+ int)   | $1-35/36*5/6*5/6$             | 421/1296     | 11.69/36  |
| 3+    1 dice Block                   | $(1/3)^1$                     | 1/3          | 12/36     |
| 2+2+2+2+ with RR                     | $1-((5/6)^4)+4*(1/6)(5/6)^4)$ | 1268/3888    | 12.69/36  |
| 2+2+2+                               | $1-(5/6)^3$                   | 91/216       | 15.17/36  |
| 5+ with RR                           | $(2/3)^2$                     | 4/9          | 16/36     |
| 4+                                   | $(1/2)^1$                     | 1/2          | 18/36     |
| -2 dice Block (no Block)             | $1-(2/3)^2$                   | 5/9          | 20/36     |
| 5+                                   | $(2/3)^1$                     | 2/3          | 24/36     |
| 6+ with RR                           | $(5/6)^2$                     |              | 25/36     |
| 6+                                   | $(5/6)^1$                     | 5/6          | 30/36     |

Deep Blue -> Save ; Light Blue -> As save as it normally gets ; Green -> Reliable ; Yellow -> Be ready for failure ; Ocher -> Don't expect to succeed ; Red -> Look for a better way (very last resort) ; Violet -> Don't, you'll just hurt yourself.

## **II. General Strategy**

General Strategy outlines long term goals you should set yourself while you play. The more important decisions to make during a turn will be discussed at a later point.

For proficient play it is not possible to make good turn to turn decisions without having a long term plan.

### **1. The Mode Of Play**

#### **a) The Standard Play - Quality 7**

The Standard Play, also called Orc- or Dwarf play has been largely established as the most proficient way to play for any race since late LRB4 times. Amongst good coaches there is almost no disagreement and if some decent coach plays a different game, he'll usually admit not to follow the best possible strategy. Here this strategy is simply referred to as '*stalling*'.

The standard play is a 2:1 victory. The idea is that both sides will never fail their offense. Therefore the only thing you can do to win the game, is by controlling the timing of your touchdown.

If you score, you want your opponent to have as little time as possible to play his own offense afterwards. If you score in turn 8 on your offense, your opponent will have only one turn left to react and counter score. That is mostly not enough, often impossible.

If your opponent then makes his TD prior to his turn 16, you'll have enough time to score back and win 2:1.

Strategies in this book will mostly discuss the question how to not be the victim of such a strategy, how to execute it best and when to abandon it. Here the short version:

##### **aa) How to execute it**

On offense this strategy requires stalling. Stalling usually means caging and screening as explained in the **Formations** part. The goal is to keep the ball in the hands of one of your players until the clock runs out and then score. You don't do anything with the ball that involves dice rolling or is even a little risky. You especially avoid passing and even hand-offs if they don't better your position. You are not in a hurry and ideally you'll walk your cage down your opponents end-zone in turn 8 with just a bunch of move actions and not rolling any dice.

##### **bb) How to protect yourself from it**

On defense you abandon any concept of 'slowing the opponent down'. The worst thing you can do, is to block off his scoring path and have him stand back with all his men. You want to provoke him to either score early or to lose the ball. The longer the game drags out without anything happening, the worse for you. However, don't make it a walk in the park for him either, or you'll find him stalling in your end zone. You need to keep the pressure up, so that he has to roll dice to advance, might fail and give you an opportunity to strike. Just focus more on stealing the ball than blocking his path.

##### **cc) When not to stall**

###### **aaa) In a bad spot**

In some situations it is better not to follow general strategy. The most likely cause is too much pressure to stall. It is never ideal to score early but it is always better to score than to lose the ball. If, however, you usually can't hold on to the ball, that is a problem stemming from your coaching

you need to address. It takes a lot of experience to tell when the pressure gets too great. Try to learn from the games you play. Remember what situations you couldn't escape from.

### **bbb) Beginner**

If you are new to the game you might find that you score more often on defense than on offense. That is quite natural because experience with other games based on probability will likely teach you to take greater risks than you can actually take because of the Turnover rules. Taking a risk, like a risky blitz on defense, can only do you so and so much harm if it fails. A stalling offense needs to be rock solid in execution in every single turn. You need the patience and attention span to do, to see a threat and to block its path before it can do something.

### **ccc) Out-Of-Re-Rolls**

Re-Rolls are your safety net if something goes wrong. If you remember the probability tables, you'll remember that things will be a lot smoother as long as some of 'em are around. If you want to stall without Re-Rolls, you'll have to be in a very solid position or have a lot of superb other skills to compensate it. Ideally save one up for really big emergencies. If you are out of Re-Rolls it is a good idea, to move towards the endzone as safely as possible.

### **ddd) Special Tactics**

The section *Special Tactics* in this guide book will discuss the possibilities that arise from dealing with players that can penetrate cages, score in one turn and out-bash you to a point, where conventional strategy doesn't work anymore.

## **b) Rock Steady Play - Quality 6**

If you think your odds on offense and defense are about equal, you'll want to go for a Rock Steady Play instead of a Standard Play. Rock-Steady-Play is especially to recommend in rookie matches, when teams do not yet have great offensive capabilities and no Block to safely execute blocks. This variant operates essentially like the Standard Play. You still avoid passing and doing anything risky needlessly. You'll take as much time as you need but if you have a good chance to score, you'll not hesitate and just take it. Given opportunity you can always change your mind and go for a Standard Play instead. If you have receivers in scoring range, you'll do the occasional hand-off to one of them here. But be aware that wherever the ball is, you'll still want plenty of players around and next to it, in case some rolls go wrong. Never rely blindly on a roll to work if you don't have to. Especially not when your offense is so weak that you have to use Rock-Steady-Play in the first place.

## **c) Passing-Game - Quality 6**

This is the specialty of the agile teams and it is an offense that is extremely easy to execute if the team is good at it. In comparison to an incredibly hard stalling offense it can be a very tempting alternative. If you lack experience you might be better off just to go this route to increase your winning chances. In the end this strategy works too much in the hands of the Standard Strategy to make it a worthy adversary. However, if you play a superior defense, like suggested in *Special Tactics*, this may be an option for you (although usually still not the best).

In the passing game a passer usually hangs back or cages towards the middle. Ideally there is a second agile player in the middle and a lot of players, at least 4 should try to overrun the opponents half. The defender should be overwhelmed to stop all players in range and you should be able to blitz somebody free, then either pass the ball to the freed player or pass it to the player in the middle and then hand it off to the freed up player.

Besides the many rolls that can all fail in the process, the biggest problem is that due to the ball being handed so much around, it will be impossible for you to provide a decent cover of players if something fails. If a failed action results in only one player being next to the ball, even a team with poor agility will be able to blitz the ball free and secure it in a cage themselves. No matter how small the risk, it is always frustrating to lose a game, just because you rolled a single double 1 at some point. Note that this strategy is actually best, if you really have to score fast.

#### **d) Defense-Overrun - Quality 4**

This is a variant of the Passing-Game without agility or passers. Essentially you just field your carrier in the middle of the pitch, overrun the opponents defense and try to do a hand-off with no passing involved. Needless to say that a lot of movement helps. This variant is best if you are out of time, can't move your cage in range and do a poor passing game.

#### **e) Sideline-Squish - Quality 5**

Sideline-Squish is a semi fast to fast way of scoring in which a smaller group from the team, consisting out of 4 or 5 men is send down on one of the sides. In more extreme variants it will be only the ball carrier and 2 supporters. In its 3 turn variant the passer will first advance from the mid-line and then move together forward with the other players. In the (mostly) unnecessary risky 2 turn variant, the passer performs a hand-off or pass to somebody in the middle, who will operate then as new carrier. The problem with this strategy is that it is not hard for the opponent to corner the attacker. An escape route to the side will be cut off. This strategy is however not completely bad. You'll often be able to score when your opponent is slow or plays a poor defense or even wants you to score. You'll just have problems to stay there at the side. One of the positive aspects is that you can often retreat back and reformation in the middle. In rare occasions you'll have an opening on the opposing side of the pitch to run and score there. In any case, this sort of play rather speeds the game up and sometimes slows down. You can lose clock control or be baited into a risky play. If you want to stall, this might not be the best way to do it.

A Sideline-Squish is often the best variant of play if you are heavily outnumbered and don't have a reliable passing game. In the pressure and heat of a game you will find that you most often turn to some version of this strategy.

## **2. Re-Roll Management**

Re-Rolls and the number of Re-Rolls you use should have a quite significant impact on the way you play. The probability table gives you a good idea about how much your odds suffer, if you don't have RR. You might think "what does it help me to re-roll a single roll if I still have to succeed with such an amount of other rolls?". The problem with odds in Blood Bowl aren't their likeliness alone but the order we are confronted with them. This is especially true for highly likely probabilities. A 2-dice block for instance will rarely ever fail, but rarely isn't never. And the rare event will come. In a row of actions it is much likely to see this rare event only once instead of two or three times. In addition: The more likely the roll you did to begin with, the more likely the Re-Roll will work as well. a Re-Roll is a bit like taking an extra turn but that only applies if you wouldn't get through a turn without it.

So, how much Re-Rolls do you need? Mathematically speaking 4 Re-Rolls can be distributed in the most variants over 8 turns. In CRP you should probably choose a number between 2 and 5 depending on your play-stile and your skills. If you have a lot of Block, you won't need as much to re-roll blocks for instance. If you have a lot of re-roll skills you can fail on, too many RR will be wasted.

But since this is the strategy part, we'll discuss here how you deal with having a certain amount of RR rather than how many you should have.

- a) Without RR your game should be always minimalistic. Not taking risks, only do what's needed, position yourself to score.
- b) If you have one RR, you have to be aware that there will be a lot of little bad luck you'll have to deal with and some very bad luck (Double Skull on a game deciding block). You need to keep that RR for that very bad luck. Essentially you'll have to play the same as if you didn't have any Re-Rolls. The only difference will be that if you do need a Re-Roll anyways, you'll have it.
- c) If you have two RR you are essentially saved for critical actions. Things like the early pick up, handling the ball are of significant importance (Carrier would be in serious trouble if knocked down). Two RR is only for those who mess up rarely in the first place. You can use your first RR on an incredibly relevant block too. Once you have used up your first RR, you should follow the suggestion for b).
- d) If you play with three RR you have about the minimum RR for a decent play. Three RR are often enough if everything goes well but you might get in trouble if things go bad. You need to save your RR for critical situations and accept failure without re-rolling it unless you run risk of losing the ball (Cage isn't secure). At the same time you can take progressively more risks the further the half advances without you using up your RR. If your RR get used up, see strategies a, b, c.
- e) Four RR mean, you can RR on average every second turn. The first turn will usually be of critical importance, leaving you with 3 in 7 if something goes wrong. In that case you should go with strategy d) from turn 2 on. In turn 1 you can RR pretty much anything you want as long as it is a turnover of some relevance (Unnecessary 2d block that allows a few more blocks). If you keep 4 RR in turn 2, you'll be in a good spot.  
As a rule of thumb it's always worthwhile to keep your RR over in the next turn to have one left in all your final turns. That is part of game control.  
Since you'll want to employ a Standard Play most of the time, it will be the last turns that are really important. With 4 RR you have just enough to focus on them too.  
If you play defense you'll have to tighten the pressure because in difference to the beginning of the half you can't allow your opponent to score anymore. You'll need RR to take some risks.  
If you play offense you'll come to a point where you have to score and invest yourself in making it happen. You can't afford ruining a well stalled half with not scoring in the last turn because you ran short of RR.
- f) With 5 RR you enter the area of luxury RR. One RR is essentially extra now. If you don't use it in turn 1 and drop to strategy e), you can start thinking about survival rather than only turnovers. You still should be careful not to waste a RR too easily on an irrelevant last turn action on a lineman. But to save a fragile positional even if he isn't doing something important may be very well worth it. If you get through two or three turns without using a RR you can switch to strategy g).
- g) It is fine to have 6 RR, but if you do have 6, you want to get rid of them. There will be only 2 turns were you not get to use a RR. If you don't have many re-roll skills it is fine to wait a turn if nothing goes wrong. But from there on out you should be aware that you have a Re-Roll for pretty much any turn left. If you don't use them, you waste them. Your biggest issue is now that you can only use one RR per turn. So be careful to do everything critical first, have the RR as back up. Once that is done you are moving on to the fun part. You can risk more, you can waste a RR. You can use a RR for a blitz on a push-back, cause some carnage with a player with some carnage skills.
- h) 7 RR means you are set. Don't bother with worrying about that turn where you don't have a RR.

Just waste them. First action in turn, last action in turn, whatever goes wrong use the RR on it. Once you used it, be careful for the rest of the turn, then get nasty again in the next turn. If you haven't used your RR during the turn you might as well use it on a last action block push back.

g) 8 RR. You bought too many. There will rarely be a situation where you get to use 8. Proceed as with 7.

Be aware of the intricate double dynamic of the RR. Your in turn actions consist of 2 phases: The pre re-roll and the post re-roll phase. Once you enter the post re-roll phase you have to play according to the situation based on the new probability chart you are dealing with post RR. That means: Rather move support players than key players. Don't force a score, rather build a cage. (The carrier needs to be knocked down first just as long as he doesn't stumble.)

In the end of course you'll need to make an overall assessment of the chances of your opponent and your own and in the end take the risk you have to take. Therefore a good turn strategy is important too and ideally one that is capable of switching from a medium dangerous plan to a save one in a split second. Just be prepared for eventualities.

### **3. Player Management**

Another important aspect of long term strategy is the number of players you bring.

a) If you run a minimal squad of 11, you can't just go head to head with your opponent. Every lost number will hurt you in- and after the game. The longer you keep your numbers intact, the better your chances to win. It doesn't matter if you play Dwarves or Orcs. If your numbers go down, you are even more screwed. Agile teams are still half operational when they are outnumbered. Not that this is a good idea. To large parts BB is a game of applying player resources efficiently to situations. The less players you have the worse your odds. So, as a guideline, stay away from your opponent until something important happens. A foul has to be a damn good trade-off (CPOMBer / Cage-Breaker) but generally just don't do it. If it backfires you might lose the game on something as random as that.

Let your opponent come to you, try to win the game with blocks by keeping your opponent on distance. Only apply yourself somewhere if you know your opponent doesn't have the strength to fight back. Late into half 2 you can slowly increase pressure. Nobody will see any reserves from there on out so you can really alter your play-style to your preference once you get there, foul or do whatever you feel like.

b) The 12 player build is very solid and comes at efficient cost. When you start your first half, you can expect somebody to get hurt, so just play like you had 11 guys. Once you reach the final stages of the first half you can up the pressure a bit until somebody gets ko'ed or worse. A foul on an important player is now more viable but still rather do it later into the drive than sooner. Also remember that if a player of yours is already removed, these evaluations won't help you.

c) The 13 player build is probably provides the best balance between luck and reliability. You'll be always tempted to cut down on players to have a lower TV and get more inducements. The problem is that CAS and KO's are semi-random occurrences you can't always predict. Depending on the flow of the game, you'll end up outnumbered. You'll find that losing two players after the first half is pretty common. So, with 13 players you'll be able to field 11 in half 2 most of these times. Unless you play a very armored race (av9), you shouldn't get ahead of yourself. You still can easily have four player losses in a half if you are reckless. You should still avoid going to war unless it's late in the half. Fouling at the end of the first half is probably a good idea now if you haven't lost anybody before.

d) With 14 players you are set to take risks. You can now go to war without having to worry too

much. You can even foul if you already have ko'ed players. Since you have so many players, even a couple of KO's won't do you too much, because odds are, somebody will come back. However, once you lost one or two players here for good, you might want to adapt your play-style to the situation and slow down a little.

e) 15 players can usually be considered excessive unless you play a particularly fragile race like Stunties or Vampires. Coaches who run this amount usually do it, because they follow a special strategy. And you are well advised, only to do it for the same reason. Essentially you are at a point now, where you want your players to get hurt. If nobody gets hurt, that would just proof your team is mismanaged. I have occasionally run a Chaos Pact team with 15 players, competing against a lot of Claw-Mighty Blow-Piling On. Occasionally you run into a different match-up where you know that you will not get hurt. The way to handle these matches is by redistributing the player resources now. Where on a low number team you should be careful to end your turn dodging out of tackle-zones, exposing players needlessly and perform excessive fouling, all this is a recommendable option now. If you have too many skilled players, you can pick who you need for your half. But be aware that you don't want expensive excess players.

f) 16 players are very problematic. Running a full squad means that you won't get to buy stars from your inducement money. For regular teams there is no real reason to run a squad of that size. If you happen to run one of that size, follow the advice for 15 players. Fragile races will find that this often is still not enough. If you constantly suffer from player losses, you can't compensate for, look at what actions you perform in your own turn that cost you players and try to avoid them. Examples: (TTM, Dodges, War).

## **4. Assess your Opponent**

Although you should have a general idea how to approach a game with a team you have to be ready to adapt your strategy at any given time based on your opponent and your situation.

Here some questions you should focus on in the beginning:

### **a) What will be likely his game plan?**

If you are facing a new opponent it is important that you take his roster and study his skill and player choices carefully, reevaluate your analysis based on how he sets up and plays his turns.

### **b) Do I have the skills and strength to defend myself if he goes to war with me?**

The biggest obstacle to fighting an opponent head on is a lack of guard on your own team. If you have it you still need to be able to use it mobile. If your opponent however, comes with a lot of guard himself, there is only so and so much you can do. Against stronger opponents it is generally better to set up broader to be able to apply assists better when you don't have guard. Against weaker opponents you want to set up tighter and involve them in more scrums. Pure raw strength is of course a factor as well. If your opponent is stronger but doesn't have Block, you can actually build a strategy around relying on -2d blocks in critical situations.

### **c) What game deciding threats does he have?**

What is his best carnage type Blitzer, what is his best sacker? What attributes does his best ball carrier have and do you have a player type on your own to handle him? What other specialists does he use? Pretty much any player of strategical importance he has only once is a good target for

blitzing and fouling. If for instance your opponent has only one guarder, that would be a good target to take out. A leader can be a good target if he hasn't used his skill yet. If you can't take the threats out, you may want to immobilize them, depending on how much of a problem they are. Maybe you just want to stay out of their way or outmaneuver them. Whatever you do, just don't let them take you by surprise.

#### **d) Can I cage safely or do I have to watch out for something?**

This goes without saying. The biggest threats are those to your offense. Be especially aware of them and if you lose them out of your sight during a turn, check again where your opponent has moved them. Those players make the game.

#### **e) Are there players with 1-turn-potential?**

If there is a player with a good shot, you can't go with the standard strategy unless you find a way to take him out. If he only has a semi-decent shot to score in one turn, you still may want to go with the standard and hope that he fails.

### **III. Formation**

I'm not going into the important topic of the positioning regarding blocking because there is already a very good free article about it on GW's BB homepage section called "The art of blocking."

If you haven't read it yet, now would be a good time.

For the entire strategy section it is assumed you have a good understanding about the blocking game.

Let's go.

#### **1. General Positioning**

Usually your options to improve your probability simply by making the right choices are limited. Therefore it is imperative that you don't end up in a situation where you have to do hard rolls in the first place.

Proper positioning is what is going to help you there.

##### **1. Introduction**

Positioning has a range of purposes:

###### **1. Pitch Control (*Screening*)**

Disrupt the opponents game. Use the own players as a chain of bodies and limit the operational range of your opponents players.

###### **2. Cover (*Caging*)**

The need to protect certain players. To mention is here the *ball carrier*, but also any player who has a lower armor than the rest of your team and players who are particularly valuable for you that you shouldn't put at risk.

###### **3. Key Positions**

While most of your players will always be busy doing NR 1 or NR2 you will often need individual players also that break out of line and occupy strategical points.

To mention is here the *scoring range*. That is the distance a player has to be at to score. It is generally helpful to have at least one player in range to score at a time. At the same time, having a player in the opponents field also means that he is constantly a threat to stab them in the back which leads us to the second important reason to occupy special positions: To be able to get to the ball carrier. You can assume most of the time that everything will be fine as long as you do proper pitch control but sometimes you will find yourself suddenly out-positioned by some lucky dice, a superior team or a good coaching.

Having one or two players hang back and fourth to cover the pitch or to circle around tackle-zones to get to opponent key players will help you to win the game without having to do ridiculously hard rolls once something has gone wrong.

###### **4. Tagging**

This sums up the direct confrontation with the enemy. Again I refer to 'the Art of Blocking' here as an introduction. A player that is tagged will not be able to move anywhere without rolling dice but tagging comes with a range of disadvantages I will address later.

The reasons to position a player for one of the reasons doesn't exclude a benefit for one of the

others. You only have 11 players, so your mind should be always on how you can use a player to control the most of the pitch, cover your key players and to occupy a key position with him at the same time. Note that a tagging player is usually no good for a cage or a screen. The exceptions will be discussed later under the *Tagging-* section.

## **2. Pitch Control**

Pitch Control should always be your primary concern. If you have players left and don't know what to do with them, focus on limiting the operational range of your opponents.

Your best tool to do that is *the screen*. There are three different types of screens.

### **a) The Tight Screen - Quality 8**



'O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O

The tight screen leaves an empty space between squares. You will see it very often. Dodging through it means the opponent has to go through 2 tackle-zones. It is tricky to field an assist to create an opening through a blitz and if the blitz ends up in a push-back, no real hole is created. The downside of the tight screen is that its player consumption is pretty high. To cover the entire length of a screen like this requires 7 players alone. And even then there are openings at both sidelines that need special addressing. They will be discussed in the section: *Positioning at the sides*.

A tight positioning makes a lot more sense for purposes of caging. For screening you will usually want to use this primarily in a more local way (IE not to cover the entire pitch).

### **b) The Wide Screen - Quality 7**



O X O O X O O X O O X O O X O

The wide screen allows you to cover the entire length of the pitch with only five players. Your player consumption is low and the sides are no structural weak points compared to the rest of your (weak) screen. It is not really possible to dodge through but opponents of very agile teams will occasionally try anyways. Don't be surprised if it happens, be prepared.

Contrary to a tight screen a wide screen can be easily cracked open with a blitz. This makes the wide screen unsuitable to hold an opponent in check for an entire half. Its main purpose is to hold the opponent off just for the next turn and to buy you enough time to reposition.

The opponent will be able to use his blitz and get through but he will be forced to use his blitz on one of the 5 players who create the screen and whoever is behind it will be save.

### **c) The Body Wall - Quality 3**



X X X X X X X X X O O O O O

Legitimate uses of body walls usually are pertaining handling Stunty players and in rare occasions

high agility players close to the end of the half. Body walls can be best penetrated either through blitzes or by walking around them if enough time is left.

If you have to use one you should be accordingly desperate. Especially the two players at the side are at a crowd-push-chain-push risk. If there is time, it should be possible to walk around it.

Doing stuff like this is in general not recommended. The entire flank is open. You are not only exhausting your player potential too quickly and expose your key players, you are also giving your opponent the chance to tag your players in an unfavorable way. Another disadvantage is that body walls are subject to chain pushes and can create surprising and unexpected openings through that.

#### d) The Open Wall - Quality 2



X O X X X O X X X O X X X O X

Beginners will sometimes try to copy a positioning they have seen somewhere else and incorrectly leave huge openings between players. In difference to a two square distance, a 3 square distance has holes. Wherever you can walk through without rolling dice has almost 0 strategical value. This 4 player mess consists now of 4 completely isolated players. Your opponent can walk past them or at them, circle around them, block them, blitz them, foul them. Easy to take out of the game.

You might think that sounds pretty bad, but there can still be a lot of merit in using an at least partial open wall.

Any structural weakness can be used to create a trap, but the 3 square opening is the queen of traps. The incentive to go somewhere without rolling dice is very high. If you build a wide screen and leave an opening there is a good chance your opponent is going to use it.

Sometimes you might want your opponent to attack from the side to nail him in there. Other times you might want him to attack from the middle so that your own players from the side are able to get to the middle to give support. .

That being said, the 3 square opening means your opponent has an unused blitz left. There will be almost no way for you to control how your opponent uses that blitz, so be prepared, because if you build a trap like that and the opponent has decent dice, he is likely going to score.

For more details on this read in the Setup section about: The-3 Square-Trap.

#### e) 2-Dimensional Screens

If you want to block as much space as possible a 1-dimensional line is rarely the best way to do it. You want to react to your opponents positioning. If he has gathered all his players in one place, great! Surround him! Note that all screens are only as strong as the weakest part in it. The more attention to detail you spend here, the easier will your life be in the next turn.

## **aa) 2 Dimensional Tight Screens**

### **aaa) Corner - Setups - Quality 8**



In this example for a corner setup, the wight and the two closest zombies build corners in the formation. The advantage of this way of screening is it's high solidity. The corners do not have any real structural weakness. The disadvantage is again a too high player consumption. Handling your player consumption is so essential to the game that you will almost never be in a situation where it is a good idea to build THAT solid corners.

Note the werewolf added at the side to handle the structural weakness of the tight screen there.

### **bbb) Soft Displacement - Quality 8**



The soft displacement will usually be the best way to handle corners. The players are now one square displaced from their original line. They are a structural weakness in the formation. It is possible to dodge past them now and only having to deal with 1 tackle-zone but since you have a player freed up compared to the corner setup, you can use the same player to tighten up those structural deficits.

But even if you don't do it, it is still a pretty solid formation since it can't be broken open on a push-back with a blitz.

### **ccc) Open Corners - Quality 4**



This is a bad idea.

With the open corner, the corner player (wight) is simply missing. The (misguided) argument is that the two zombies still sufficiently block the path with their two tackle-zones. But as you can see it is possible to simply walk in there and out again with no more than a dodge in 0 tackle-zones. On top of it a blitz here can create a fatally huge opening.

The open corner essentially ruins the point of the whole tight screen. It is too massive of a weakness. If you end up realizing you made such an error, simply add another player nearby to create higher structural integrity. Don't leave it like that.

### ***bb) 2-Dimensional Wide Screens***

#### **aaa) Corner-Setups - Quality 8**



In wide screens corner players are much more important than in tight screens. You could field the corner player slightly out of place if you want, but your player consumption will still be the same in the end.

Using a corner or corner-like player for a solid wide screen is recommended.

#### ***bbb) Soft Displacement - Quality 6***

Your players are slightly out of line now. You can't really take a full corner on like this without tightening it up somewhere. This is probably the least solid variant that still makes some sense. An agile opposing player will be able to dodge through it, if he wants to. Creating an opening with a blitz should be no issue at all but at least you can't just walk through and even dodging isn't without

risk either.

### **ccc) Hard Displacement - Quality 5**

The hard displacement is de facto open. The opponent could risk even sending ag3 players through here if it gets him something. He has to simply manage a dodge into 0 tackle-zones. Unless something valuable is behind there to blitz he is probably still going to blitz a part of the line to create an opening. Hard displacement should only be used against very unagile teams or in combination with a second line of defense somewhere near behind it.

## **3. Cover Strategies**

Covering and caging your players is mainly interesting in regard to your ball carrier, but you will find that any more valuable player is worth protecting most of the time. If you have done a solid screen with the methods described above, protection shouldn't be an issue but sometimes you simply don't have the resources in players available to build a proper screen. "*Covering*" attempts the opposite of field control. Instead of trying to occupy the entire pitch, you are focusing on merely protecting the bare minimum of players you need to protect.

Instead of a screen, you build a cage now.

A cage is much more efficient than a screen when it comes to fending off Blitzers, simply because a screen can be circumvented a cage is always right in the opponents face. It's impossible to get an assist on a guy in the middle of a cage just like that. Yet, caging is no alternative to solid planning. Careful consideration of all the options your opponent is going to use makes the screen the far better choice than the cage. The cage is essentially for those who are too lazy to think about how to stop an opponents advance otherwise and for those who don't have the resources in players to build a screen.

### **a) Classic Cage - Quality 8**

The terminology of the cage is almost as old as the game itself. Guidelines about how to you use it were around when I started to play the game in 1995.

The classic idea is that you move a set of 5 players over the pitch ideally without rolling any dice. The center player is the ball carrier while being surrounded by 4 (ideally bully) other players on all his 4 diagonal corners.

The opponent who can't get past the bully players will have no choice but to let you proceed.

So far the theory. In practice the cage is often a subject of massive assault from the other team and unless you play elves and can dodge out anywhere, you will need more than just 5 players to move anywhere. However, that is more of a Tactics issue, this will be discussed in the Tactics section under: *Scoring* in greater detail. This section will focus on the alternatives to the classic cage and why they are good or not.

The classic cage is still the most solid and the most practiced method today to protect a ball carrier.

### **b) Cross Cage - Quality 2**

Some beginners tend to think it won't matter whether players stand vertical or straight to the carrier but this is not true at all. The cross cage is not a cage at all. It provides minimum protection similar to a straight line were you can't field assists without guard and where you have to deal with a lot of bodies just standing in the way.

Besides that there is no real benefit in building a cross or partially cross cage.

The four corners of the cross are completely exposed and compared to a straight line it is easier to

surround and by simply adding a player in one of the corners it is even possible for the opponent to cause unpredictable chain-pushes for you and leave you completely out of position. Do not use a cross cage. It is a bad idea.

### c) Wide Cage - Quality 7

Contrary to the classic cage, the wide cage uses the same 2 square distance setup you are familiar with from screening by now.

Dodging into a cage usually requires only one dodge to get to the carrier rather than two or three on a screen. That makes a wide cage somewhat tricky if you are up against agile Blitzers, leapers or the like. The wide cage provides plenty of space for assists and often allows a dodge into only two tackle-zones. That is a risky dodge but very well worth it if it allows you to get to the carrier.

To compensate for the structural deficits, it is beneficial to place multiple players in the middle, to increase the tackle-zone numbers when somebody is dodging in.

The second weakness of the wide cage lies in what happens when one of the corners is blitzed. The opponent has now ample access to the insides of the cage and can use specialized tagging players to render most of the cage immobile and trap you on the spot.

The plus side of the wide cage is the higher maneuverability on the unoccupied side compared to the classic cage. It is not that easy to lock somebody in from all sides at once. And while one side might cause you serious trouble there will be almost always a way back unless you were building it somewhere on the sideline.

Another reason to resort to a partially wide cage is because it might save you some GFI while advancing.

Since you can't really afford to fail in the process of building a cage, any dice roll while building it is a huge risk when it comes to winning the game.

Another aspect to consider is the scatter of the ball if it gets lost. In an open cage the ball will scatter likely within the cage next to some of your other players. A pick up attempt will be relatively hard for the opponent. A small cage that gets cracked open usually has a lot of people standing on very tight space which means the ball can easily scatter 2 or 3 squares out of place and end up somewhere very unfavorable for you. If that is worth it to risk dropping the ball in the first place is for you to decide.

The wide cage backed up with a wide screen are my favorite tools in playing a proper offense.

### d) Bizarre Cage - Quality 3-8

There are too many ways to create a bizarre cage to list them here all. In a sense they are modified wide cages. There is really no need for you to build a proper cage. What really matters is that there are no structural weaknesses. If you can do that without thinking in a box: More power to you!

### e) The Full Body Cage - Quality 4

The Full Body Cage is a variant where 8 players occupy all squares around the ball-carrier.

In regular game this is established as a terrible technique:

1. You make it easy for your opponent to surround you and to gain control most of the pitch.
2. Your opponent will be able to chain-push your ball-carrier from virtually any angle into a space where he wants him to be and what he is going to do is going to be incredibly hard to predict and to prepare for.
3. You are giving your opponent lots of surface to tag in a way favorable to him.

You will maybe feel that at the point where you end your turn that you are in a good spot only to realize that your opponent has "magically" turned the situation around and you are now fighting for survival.

Since player consumption is such an important part of the game, this is no doubt a terrible way to

play.

However, there are valid points in certain situations, most importantly to mention "Leapers". Usually a player who is jumping in your cage doesn't pose that much of a threat to you. Sure, he will be able to get to knock the carrier a little around but assuming your one is at least a Blodger, he'll still have a hard time to get him down when he is surrounded by your support players. Some leapers are however so specialized with Strip Ball and Wrestle and other skills, that you might feel this is the answer for you. Since the body cage is actually secure for the next turn it is a suitable solution to hold the enemy off for a turn. It will however hardly help you to get through a half. On better ways to handle leapers, check the *Advanced Strategies* section at the end for: *Handling leapers*.

## 4. Tagging

Tagging discusses any situation where a player of the own team stands adjacent to a player of the opposing team. Tagging is a topic complex enough to fill an entire book on its own. This section will only introduce the most basic considerations with which new coaches often struggle:

1. When do I follow up?
2. When do I use my players to tag my opponent?
3. When do I dodge out of a tackle-zone?
4. What value has a tagged player for screening and caging and how can I make use of it?

### a) General Considerations

aa) There are some differing opinions on this but I don't think that it really goes against any top coaches opinion to say that in competitive play it has mostly established that as a general rule of play: **you should rather not tag than tag**. There are cases to be made in developed as well as undeveloped teams why you may want to break this rule.

bb) Tagging is like going to war: People get hurt. If you play in a non developing environment you might not care about this. If you play a more squishy team, going to war will not only hurt you long term but also deplete your player resources short term during the game.

If you play a very healthy race in a developing environment you will find that av9 isn't all that its cracked out to be. You are still going to get hurt. Bad.

cc) If you start tagging players, don't do it halfhearted It's like going to war and only sending half your soldiers into battle. The ones that go will just be slaughtered and the rest will be left helpless.  
**If you go in, go all-in.**

### b) When do I follow up?

Generally you follow up for the same reasons you move any player: Because the player will be in a better position than if he wasn't moved.

The only thing really special about the follow up is that you only have a simple choice, in whether to follow or not to follow.

As a rule of thumb the following can be said:

aa) If you just rolled a pow, your opponent is on the ground and no one of the other team is next to him you probably want to follow up: Players on the ground should be always tagged by someone just so that they have to either dodge away, get up and stand tagged or waste a blitz to free themselves.

bb) If you just rolled a push back, go with the general rules. And general rules say: Don't follow up for no good reason.

## c) When do I use my players to tag?

Besides wanting to go to war the probably most common case is to disable a player's mobility. Disabling someone's mobility isn't usually a healthy strategy for the reasons mentioned under NR 1 of this section. It does in fact usually equate a half-hearted attack. However you will find yourself in impossible situations sometimes where you won't know how to help yourself differently.

### aa) Tagging to disable opponents

Generally if your opponent is timid and rather dodges than blocks, there is no reason not to constantly go after him. You can't lose and only win. Most opponents will however be smart enough to place blocks on you if you let them. For disabling opponents you should therefore use a player on your team that is of little value to you. Furthermore: The more reserve you have the more worthwhile is this strategy. If you don't have any reserve you really should be careful. Having to play a match with only ten Dwarves ain't a pretty thing.

If you try to disable a player with high agility and potentially dodge and no block you will find that your disabling attempt is of little value. But as long as he doesn't block you, that shouldn't really matter to you: Your opponent will have all the risk and you will have none, even if the risk is just 1 fail in 36 rolls.

Then there are curious players like the saurian. The saurian comes with a 6 4 1 9 stat-line. He is a 'to-tag' player by design. He is very strong, very fast, very robust, but he can't dodge for his life. Although you can disable almost all stronger players with a tagging, this one is probably the most extreme example for its uniquely high speed and the ability to get virtually anywhere if you let him just walk around. The previously said applies to these types even more. You do really want to avoid tagging them. It's pointless to get in a fight with them, but if you don't come after them, they will probably come after you. Give them as little surface to penetrate as possible, disable them whenever you feel it makes a difference and try to keep the game running if necessary. Be aware that there is no faster way to deplete your own player resources than by tagging saurian-like player types. So if you have a team with the proper strength, you might even try to pick a fight with them (if you feel like they would come after you otherwise). If you are agile, you just stay away and the middle ground teams are probably done for.

### bb) Tagging for war

There are a lot of situations where it is worth to pick a fight. Most of those however aren't worth it from a team development point of view.

The problem is, if you tag somebody, you don't get to throw punches at him, he gets to throw punches at you. But if your opponent throws a punch it is enough for him to roll a push-back to be rid of you again and suddenly you will find that no matter how often you tag him, he is the only one who is throwing punches. Although most blocks have only a small probability to injure you, the accumulation of so many hits will eventually ruin your game.

So, approaching your enemy is all about avoiding that exactly that happens. Meaning: Always make sure that his blocks will have really bad odds when he hits you. How can you do that:

The most important indicator is strength. A stronger player of yours is never bad off, going 1:1 with a weaker player of the other team.

However, if your opponent can easily place two assists on that player of yours, this won't be a worthwhile strategy. Subsequently it is equally important that you either cover the flanks of the player you send into battle, or at least make sure that no-one of the other team can support the player he is currently tagging. Note that this is close to impossible to do which is exactly the reason why you should avoid combat in the first place. Other issues you are going to have to deal with are guarders for instance. They ruin any support ratio, although having your own guarders obviously helps.

Then you should only send Blockers/Wrestlers/Blodgers against blockers and players with no Block skill and only Dodge skill against players with no Block skill, as was explained in the *probabilities* section.

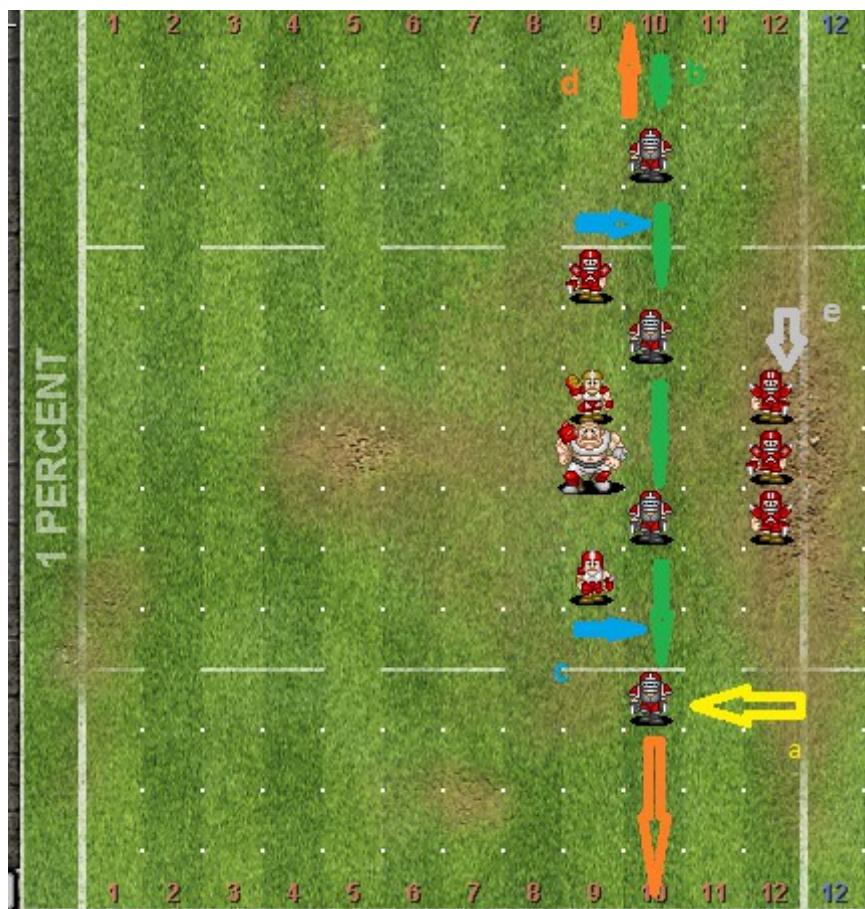
## IV. Setups

### 1. Defensive Setups

#### a) Standard Setup Group

Standard Setups focus on the placing players in the middle with a lot of cover and protection. They are worried less about actually stopping the opponent from advancing in his first turn. The argument is that you can't predict what your opponent is going to do. With this setup type every player is in the center and mobile in every direction and the coaches options remain open to react to every respective play appropriately.

##### aa) The Standard Setup / Wide Third Line



### **aaa) Closed Frontline -e-**

The standard setup employs a couple of characteristic you will want to use almost all the time. Most important part of it is the all-linemen frontline e) marked with the gray arrow. The argument is that the frontline consists of the players that take the first hits and the competent opponent will find a way to get everything down that is put up there. After evaluating some of my teams I noticed that players dedicated to frontline duty have a 50% higher mortality rate than the rest of my teams. The three players adjectancy serves the purpose of minimizing the number of blocks possible to perform against them and to create some sort of cover for the center. Putting a valuable player on the line and losing him in your first turn is definitely something you are going to regret some time in the future.

### **bbb) 2 – Square - Distance -a-**

Going on to the screen in the middle. It is placed two squares away from the frontline as displayed with the yellow arrow marked with an a). You don't want those players on the frontline because it would just increase the number of potential targets for your opponent from 3 to 7. You only want to give him a minimum number of targets. Remember you got the whole game ahead of you and you don't want it to be over in Turn 1 already. There would be almost no reason not to just put those players in a 1 square distance if it wasn't for the Kick-Off-Result Quick Snap. In this event all opponent players can move one square into the other half, efficiently getting adjacent to everyone in the second line. It may be sometimes more advantageous to just use the second line if you have to counter-score for instance and move into the opponent half quickly but assuming you are not under any kind of pressure third line is just safer. On your first defense setup you can almost only lose so no point in pushing your luck and taking chances unless you have an abundance. Quick Snap is one of the rather common Kick-Off Events with a 4/36 chance of occurrence

### **ccc) 2 – Square - Screen -b-**

The middle screen is placed wide with a 2 square distance of each player (marked with a green b)). A 1 square distance would suffice too and the middle could be even uncovered assuming that the three players on the frontline create enough of a screen to make it unappealing to blitz somebody positioned just in the middle. The 2 square distance is ideal because it still serves as a wide screen, impossible to get through and if the opponent sends out players to get them one on one, he has to spread them out potentially leaving openings. Third row players can swoop in in the first turn and give assists to men left in tackle-zones. For example if a Human Blitzer was put in a zone by a St4 Black Orc Blocker, 2 third line players could assist the Blitzer and 2d-block the Black Orc. However, since the Orcs have the ability to blitz first they can easily tear such a wide screen apart and walk right into the middle. So this setup is more build to assure short time survival just to the point where you are actually in the game and can do stuff. The second line is still subject to player removal as one of these players will be targeted by a blitz and there is a chance that you are going to have to play the game with one of those guys less, so be careful to not put anything here that could be easy prey like a valuable player with lower armor. You can be almost be certain that he will be targeted. (Your opponent isn't going to blitz somebody randomly, he is going for the weakest you present to him).

### **ddd) Sideline Distance -d-**

With d) marked in orange/red you see the two square, respectively 3 square distance all players maintain from the sideline. Since they are so exposed and alone you don't want them to be even only 2 squares away from the side because the opponent could use his blitz to push one of them against the wall in his turn and put you in a very bad spot: Either to take care of the player at the side first by means of blocking or dodging to prevent him getting pushed out of the pitch and to

ignore some important situation somewhere else on the pitch or to take care of other stuff first and lose the player at the side as a result. Be especially careful of Frenzy players and always check your opponent team before you plan to set somebody 2 squares close to the side since an immediate and avoidable removal of one of your players in turn 1 would be very fatal for you and your chances. (Probability wise that loss would just go on top of the other losses you might have in the same turn.) If you possess Stand Firm players or Side Step players you can of course easily ignore all that and there is no real reason to not just cover the sides entirely to prevent the opponent from just walking through there. The Standard Setup doesn't really stop your opponent from advancing at all. It only forces him to advance over the side rather than the middle. That isn't even necessarily good for you but if he does so your players will be mostly intact and in the middle of the pitch having the widest area of movement to react on everything the opponent does.

### **eee) Protected Players -c-**

Marked under c) in blue you see the third screen or rather last line of players, usually consisting of the weakest armored or most valuable players. This line is for those, you don't want to be targeted by a blitz right off the bat. Your play-makers, special positions and reduced armor players. Be aware that if you have an av8 team and manage to keep a distance from the other team but constantly give your opponent a blitz on the one av7 player you have, you are going to have efficiently almost no advantage over an av7 team until the point where all your own av7 players are removed.

Be aware that a smart opponent with fast players might try to outrun the second line. Be aware of the speed potential of the opponents Blitzers. In the example shown above, the passer and the leftover linemen are subject to blitzes by means of moving 8 squares from the opponent side of the line of scrimmage.

If the opponent bash capabilities are limited and the exposed players aren't too valuable like both is the case on rookie teams, it can be worthwhile to just ignore the potential threat and let the opponent risk a couple of GFI for a hit, even if just for purposes of draining his Re-Rolls. But he probably won't go for it anyways unless he thinks it is worthwhile. So be vigilant

The chance that your opponent will crash right through the second line via dodges is almost 0. For both of you the half has just started and there is a significant risk in the health of isolated players in the opponent territory

**Weaknesses:** Doesn't stop the opponent. Isolates the players on the frontline and makes them vulnerable in the follow up turns.

**Strengths:** Provides maximized protection for the teams players and still maintains a high maneuverability

### **bb) The Wide Frontline / Third Line Setup**



The Wide Frontline basically uses the same approach as the standard setup but only moves the front

apart. The point is to either force the opponent to put all his players on the line of scrimmage to get sufficient assists to get everybody down and to expose his own back field in the process or because the opponent has a lot of guard he could utilize on should the three players on the line of scrimmage end up in a big crowd in the follow up turns.

**Weaknesses:** The middle is very exposed. It is easier to get more blocks on the front line players and they all end up in very isolated spots.

**Strength:** Guard is useless. The opponent has to use up a lot of resources in strength and assists. Reduced One-Turn-Score ability.

### **cc) The Standard Setup – Big Guy Style / Tight Third Line**



The choice between putting the big guy in the middle or a lineman is often of little difference. Details like your opponents team and your own options should be the deciding factor. Basically the big guy IS the punchbag of your team. He is the one player with usually higher armor and his strength will give the opponent a hard time to break through. He is usually of higher value and you may not want to lose him right away, on the other hand, getting beat is exactly his job description. So if you cowardly hold him back like I did in the first standard example, he ain't doing his job. If you have a troll, there is almost never a situation where you don't want him in the front because he is a) cheap and b) has regenerate and lets face it: Big Guys aren't good for much else. If they get hurt it won't really mess up your game because you can't really use them due to their inability to properly re-roll.

You do not really want to combine a big guy with a Wide-Screen-Frontline because a tight line provide his flanks with limited cover and if they aren't knocked over, the opponent may have sometimes a hard time to even 2d-block the ogre. If you isolate the ogre he is just screwed. They can swamp him from all sides and he will only get out of it by the time the drive is over. If he is lucky. If all three of them stay in the middle they all can get up again and easily keep four or five opposing players busy for a couple of turns and all sorts of things can happen.

In this example I added a couple of other things. Since I had now 2 free'd up linemen I used them to cover the sides. Since the opponent will most likely attack the sides because that is the route he has to go through if he wants to enter my half, the players next to the side are the most exposed and I basically make him use his blitz up on another lineman. A problem with that is that the one blitz my opponent has, will certainly be performed with a player who has the Block skill and my linemen don't have that privilege. Therefore they get knocked down on a 50% chance per dice while for the Blitzers it would be only 1/3 per dice. In this example I simply decided I could rather take the loss of a lineman than the loss of a Blitzer despite the higher injury chance.

I could have kept the 2 remaining Blitzers in the third line but since they aren't any more valuable than the other 2 Blitzers in the middle I decided to make a tighter second line with them.

The two blue arrows point towards the weak spots of a tight second line: An aggressive opponent could take his own big guy to tie up two guys on one flank, then fortify his position with additional support players, meanwhile he takes the entire line of scrimmage out and uses his blitz on yet the other side getting all your weak Humans into a big brawl and archiving complete field supremacy. That is of course assuming your opponent is stronger than you. So be cautious. The first example I made really has the advantage that you can use it in almost any situation without much thinking.

**Weaknesses:** Big Guy is potentially exposed to claw attacks. Big Guy is a more valuable loss. It is easier for the opponent to tie everyone up in one big bad brawl.

**Strength:** The frontline has now enough strength to put up a little resistance and tie some opponent players up. The second line is much harder to penetrate and it will be almost impossible/not worth pursuing for the opponent to use a blitz to try to get a zone on somebody left in the third line.

#### **dd) Rule of Five Setup**



This is one of the most advanced setups in the game and there is really no alternative to how it can be build. The three players on the front-line and the three players in the third line provide cover for the 5 players behind them. The player in the middle of the third line is a reasonably difficult target. Because of that it is OK to have him equipped with a skill. The general idea is that you shouldn't have more than 5 developed players and constantly hold them behind a secure line of six rookies. This is a classic anti-CPOMB setup. Exception is the Kroxigor, he shouldn't be so close to enemy lines. In the sample game from this picture he wasn't fighting clawpombers, tough.

**Strength:** Maximum possible amount of players get protection without losing much mobility to charge forward.

**Weakness:** The players in cover are at a low risk to be targeted by very fast blitzers. It is therefore advisable to reinforce both exposed sides amongst the 5 with more sturdy players. To really improve protection move everyone from the third and fourth line one line backwards to increase the distance for opponent Blitzers.

#### **b) Deep Standard Setups**

While regular Standard Setups try to retain all players ability to move in all directions, the Deep Standard Setups try to address problems ranging from being tagged after a blitz to limiting the operational range of a receiver.

### **aa) Wide 2-D**



This is pretty much the standard model for the Deep Standard. Most other setups of this type can be produced via modification of this one. Curiously the outer players deeper into the field are at the greatest risk to be blitzed here because they threaten the ability to form a cage for the offense. Placing Blockers here or even Stand Firmers is probably helpfull. It is generally possible to just walk past them but it is an 8 square distance just to make it away from the sideline without a blitz. That means to walk a reciever down that side, he probably has to GFI. If the opponent goes for an assisted blitz instead and he fails, there is also the chance that you might be able to crowd-push the assister.

The four third line players are all also likely subject to blitzes. Since they are so far apart, an opponent could form a cage further up and bring a ma8 or 9 in unsuspecting range there. A tactic I have performed countless times utilizing High-Elf Catchers. Since two can't be blitzed at once, only limited operational range can be attained here for the opponent.

The two players deep inward are relatively save but with these setups there is always a chance the front-line gets torn and a blood thirsty coach sends someone through the middle for a kill. All in all the chances for that are slim and the two most valuable and fragile players should be placed here.

Strength: Poor cage formation chances for the opponent. Trap potential.

Weaknesses: Six players are exposed. Four have a long way back to the middle. Needs a sturdier player type deep and he is still very exposed.

### **bb) Inverted Spikes**



Inverted Spikes modifies the deeper positions to give them better cover. The deep outward players have moved a bit aside to make it easier for the opponent to form a cage. The message here is a bit that they don't want any trouble. It is now very attractive to run down the side and create a cage. You essentially give your opponent here a way to score fast and with reasonable low risk.

The deep inward players are very poor targets to blitz now because there is only one square for an assist and a follow up would put the Blitzer even in a tackle-zone. The possibilities to double utilize

a Blitzer after that is therefore very limited and he needs a lot of movement and luck with the front-line to make it there to begin with. So the inward players are really save now. Since their position is a little higher they have a shorter range to the Line of Scrimmage and still the ability to move back quickly. When a cage formation happens in the area of one of the blue rombusses the player deep inward needs a lot of movement to sort of circle around the cage and get ahead of things downward.

**Strength:** The deep players both cover each other better, the deep inwards are almost impossible to get. Removing the third line players is still of limited strategical use.

**Weaknesses:** A deep cage formation is now possible at the side. Opponent might exploit this to stall in your end-zone.

### **cc) Triangles**



The Triangle formation basically only repositions the deep inward players . Since they aren't really exposed either way there is no real reason to have them stand back. This way they will be faster in the opponents half.

**Strength:** Much better mobility for the deep inward players.

**Weaknesses:** The most likely blitz target, the deep outward players are now pretty isolated and if removed, the opponent has a wide area to set up a screen to protect a receiver.

### **dd) Flattened Triangle**



The flattened triangle is basically an attempt to move the four bottom players a square closer to the line of scrimmage to be more operational into the opponents space. The disadvantage is that with this type of setup the distance to get past those players is shorter and it is easier for somebody to just use the side to run past everyone in scoring range. Since the inward bottom players have little functionality on their original position, it makes more sense to use them in accordance with the Triangle formation and move them even closer to the line of scrimmage. They have cover after all.

**Strength:** Good balance between ability to move fourth and back. No strategically really good blitzing targets.

**Weakness:** Relatively easy to walk past on the side and in difference to the Standard Setups the players on the wrong side of the pitch have a larger distance to cross to get back in action. It should

be hard for them to reach the other side while the players on the side above a breach can be more easily outmaneuvered with a screen. Still the opponent has to have very fast players for that.

## b) Line Covering Setups:

### aa) Third Line Full Cover



The Line Covering Setups have the purpose to prevent the opponent from breaking through and getting into the other half at all costs. It is usually a considerable strategy if the opponent has only few turns to score left and you need to only hold him off for the time being. It should be said that it is close to impossible to really protect the sides without proper skills. This particular build has the disadvantage that it is vulnerable to the sides and the only real solution to that issue is to either employ Side Stepper or Stand Firmer to fix that. Therefore the sides are the most likely target for blitzes. As you can see in this example I use Blitzers to cover the sides instead of linemen. The consideration is that if I need to stop my opponent that badly to use such a setup, at least the both down result should be able to stop him off. Please be aware that player next to the Blitzer is very important in this example. For one it stops Frenziers to outright push my Blitzer out of the field by covering the angle from which he would need to attack to push him closer to the wall but it also stops the opponent from any attempt to nail me down at the wall. If he blocks me, he needs to push me away from the wall and he needs either a St4 or a Guarder to land a 2 d block. (If the only threat is something like a Black Orc Blocker with Ma4 you may wanna consider moving the whole line a little further backwards so that he has to take GFI to even reach you. But be careful not to fall too far back so that he doesn't even have to bring a scorer behind your line anymore.) Because my opponent is limited to a maximum of 2 players on his own sidelines himself, he will have a hard time getting many players through after he has blitzed a passage free. So he needs to be rather fast or at least agile players to dodge around me. The problem is that once he has gotten enough players through, all my remaining players are too close to the middle and half of my own team is even on the other side of the pitch entirely. So I will have a hard time to get close enough to him to nail his advances down in the next turn once he gets past me. So bottom line is: This isn't exactly a good setup to stop a race like Skaven from a 2-turn-score.

The other problem with this setup is that it virtually exposes every single player I have. You see the catcher marked with the red/orange arrow. I tried to keep him close to the middle but an opponent who wants to target him could easily do so since he is not only less protected but also with St2 also weaker. An opponent who isn't planning to score any time soon may rather exploit on that opportunity. This is just one of many other disadvantages of this defense.

**Weaknesses:** All players are exposed. If the opponent outruns the screen at the side, it is hard to get back into the game. It isn't that hard to outrun the screen at the side.

**Strength:** All players are exposed but nobody is at a serious risk. In situations with little turn time

left it is almost controllable that the players closest to the sideline will get blitzed. If the players at the side have Side Step or Stand Firm the setup becomes almost unpenetrable. There is a very good possibility to utilize on the Kick-Off-Event: Blitz with this setup because all players are so close to the middle. Also the Kick-Off-Event Perfect Defense can leave the opponent in serious trouble since he has to put all his forces on one side and is done for if that side gets shut off.

### **bb) Third Line Cover – Even Level Flanks**



This setup can be best described as a beginners mistake. It is basically disadvantageous to the previous setup in any possible way. The two flanking players can now be pushed in both directions giving the potential to abuse a frenzy player. Apart from that a player can be still pushed in the opposing direction like in the previous example. Creating an opening to the side. A guarder can now be placed head on next to both of those players and tie them up later on. In the previous example the guarder would end up in a very bad spot standing himself just ready to be pushed against the wall by the support player. Now he's just in the way. Overall not a recommendable defense.

Weakness: Inferior to the previous build in almost every way.

strength: The flankers are one square faster into the opponent half. If Stand Firm/SS is available it doesn't make too much of a difference tho.

### **cc) Full Second Line Cover**



This is a pretty straight forward cover that uses the second line instead of the third and has the advantage that it can fully utilize on the three front liners as part of it. While it is still possible to break through a Third Line Cover on any point in the screen with a pow (check previous picture), in this variant the middle is utterly shut down. There is a small chance to push the front line to the side in different angles and to create an opening in the middle but there are serious risks with that play and your opponent might not even know about the possibility. The problem with this build is that the sides are as exposed as ever. Additionally, let me put it bluntly: If there should be a Kick Off Event: Quick Snap you'll be just screwed He'll knock your players all over the place and you will leave a hole wide open and no chance to ever get back into the game for the next couple of turns. Hell, he could easily sneak past you and stall for the rest of the half if that happens. Seriously it's only a small risk, but it is usually only worth taking if you desperately need to chase into the opponent half and steal the ball because you're lacking behind.

Weaknesses: Sides are still exposed and if somebody gets through anyways, running backwards takes even longer. Very serious exposure to Quick Snap that can nullify the point of the whole setup.

strength: Everyone is very close to the middle and players can just charge in from everywhere into the opponent half to steal the ball. Apart from the three frontliners the middle is much less penetrable.

#### **dd) Improved Second Line Cover**



This looks very different from the previous example but is just a nice variant that provides cover for two players, in this case the catcher and one of the Blitzers. A very good compromise under serious time constraints. The catcher will be obviously slower now into the opponent half but his speed would be of little use anyways if he had been targeted.

Weaknesses: Still vulnerable to Quick Snap although it doesn't right out end everything anymore. Team loses a bit speed to counter score.

strength: 2 players can be actually protected while maintaining a decently solid defensive line.

#### **ee) Third Line / Sides Locked**



I just wanted to show one last Third Liner you can hybridize with many of the other builds that isn't actually bad but poses a lot of risks. The main advantage is that this build actually makes it much harder to score in 2 turns. This build is however very uncommon since coaches are told to stay away from the sidelines and rightly so. However the sideline can actually be more protective in some situations than a 1 square distance from it, simply because the opponent will have difficulties to get the right angle to perform a crowd-push and can't get somebody behind the Blitzer easily either. So any number of skills can get you in trouble here: Hypnotic Gaze, Leap, Stunty, high agility, mad opponents and even if you have to deal with none of this, the second best play is still to go for the guy next to the sideliners (marked with the blue arrow).

The good news is: He needs to get pow'd to create an opening, but if he does get pow'd your sideliners are still in trouble. The opponent can still rush through, build a nice protective screen for himself and on top of it stand somebody next to your Blitzer and threaten you with a crowd-push. And even if he doesn't do that you will still be in the uncomfortable position to move the sideliners in the next turn very early or risk that he gets drawn into a turnover.

Weakness: The player at the side suffers from a very serious exposure in his second turn.

strength: An actually improved defense of the sides.

#### **ff) 2 Hills**



This is also a variant that can be used in 2 or 3 square distance from the middle. It's a very decent setup and defiantly recommendable to people who don't want their opponents to right out rush into their half. The setup can be penetrated at the sides and in the middle but it is generally a bit harder to blitz the 2 players positioned in the inward squares. Additionally they are deep enough to act upon opposing players who break through successfully.

Weaknesses: Only 2 players a bit protected. Nobody really protected. Not that difficult to penetrate.

Strength: Very solid hybrid setup that can protect and react and counter score.

Another variation of this is to draw the two inside players even further inside and to give them cover from the other players. They gain more protection that way but the screen becomes de facto only 3 players wide and it will leave the middle very wide open.

#### **gg) Maximum Defense**

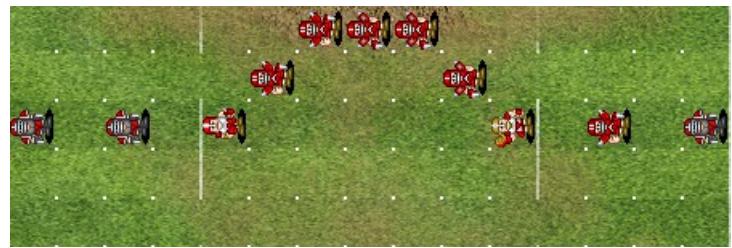


One last option I want to show is this one. Its defensive value can be even increased with the Sides Locked variant. Here I expose 2 players to the chance of Quick Snap but in return I close the gap to the frontline and can integrate it into my build without putting everyone else at too much risk. Naturally in this example I have to move the more robust players in the second line and the weaker players (the catcher and the passer) are moved inwards to the spot with the least strategical value to blitz. If the sides are locked too, the only possible quick play left is right through the middle and if that is the play, Humans can swoop in from all sides.

Weakness: Still suffers from Quick Snap and is sort of half hearted.

Strength: Has a very solid middle defense and even with Quick Snap not that easy to overcome. The sides will almost certainly remain the only valid option to get through.

#### **hh) Maximum Defense / Locked Wings**



I pretty much covered this one with the Maximum Defense setup but figured it's important enough to add a picture for it too. Just like in setup ee) Third Line/ Sides Locked, the blitz pressure shifts from the most outward players to the second outward players. In this example the blockless lineman on the right side would be the best target to penetrate this defense, assuming that a penetration through the middle fails.

### c) Open Middle Setups

#### aa) Open Middle / Locked Wings



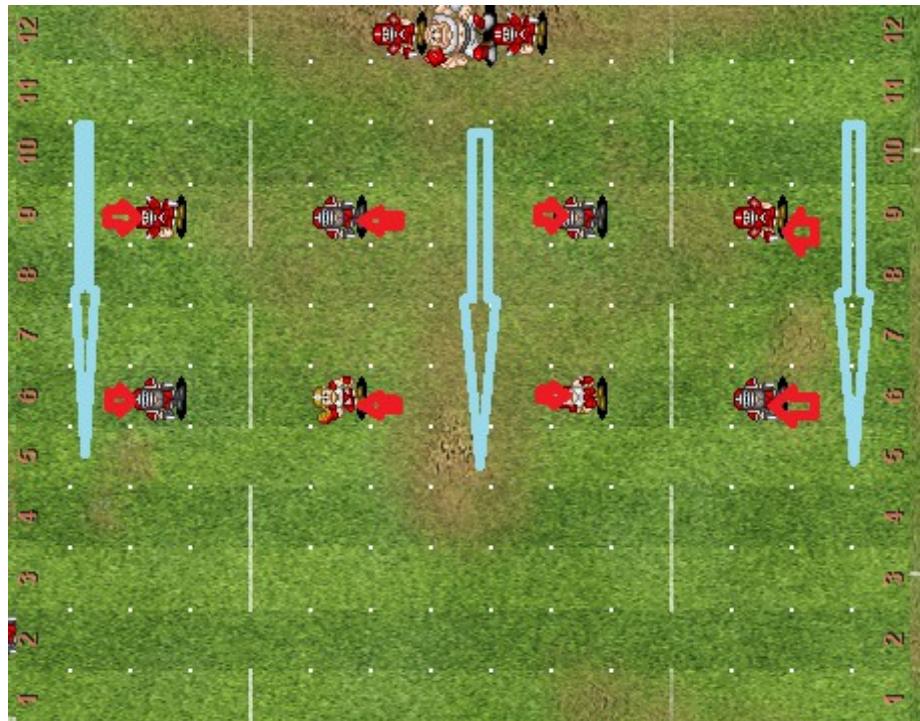
The open middle strategies have the purpose to channel every penetration of the line towards the middle. In return of utilizing this, additional resources get free at the sides. You can put 2 players on each side and completely lock it down. Even a successful blitz wouldn't let you get through there anymore. It has many advantages to bait an opponent towards the middle. Most importantly in the middle he is in reach of all of your players once the half starts. Both wings have a relatively short way towards the center. A problem with locking down the sides entirely is the vulnerability of the two players marked with the yellow arrows. Since two players covering a side is the maximum coverage you are allowed to extend to a side, the upper player next to the side is very exposed. If the opponent has a frenzy player this setup is outright self-damaging. You can't make it any easier for him to crowd one of your players right off the bat. (Although it might seriously slow him down.) If the opponent doesn't have Frenzy, he can still push the guy standing there alone against the wall. At the same time the middle is open enough that he can swoop through even without using a blitz. It can create quite the dilemma for you. Your opponent may end up in a good spot to outplay you. Here again if the players marked with the yellow arrow have Side Step or Stand Firm the setup is much more solid.

The main reason to use this over a setup that entirely locks your opponent down and stops him from advancing is that that is rarely ever a suitable goal. Unless he has very limited turn time you don't want him to just build a cage in his own half and lock up but give him the space to spread his players out and create an opening for you to steal the ball.

**Weaknesses:** Very exposed players on both sides. Easy to get through in the center. Only the two players positioned both at the sides in the lower squares are fully protected from blitzes.

**strength:** Very tight lock-up of the sides. The only possible play for a fast advance of the opponent is through the middle.

### ***bb) Open Middle / Cage Prevention***



This is another very solid setup you may want to utilize on rather often. The sides are both open now in exchange for the safety of your players and in the middle is another opening and it is rather easy for a single receiver to swoop through. The real advantage of this build is that there isn't really anywhere enough space for a whole cage to form while advancing. Or at least the cage won't manage to advance very far into your half. This setup allows both to fall further back or go closer to the mid-line. Keep an eye out for the two lower positioned players at the sides. They are now center stones of this formation because knocking one of them down may leave a side wide open. You want to make sure they are positioned deep enough in your half that your opponent can't just walk right by them. In this example a ma6 player trying to go that route would end up just next to the wall if he wanted to avoid harm to himself by walking right next to your lower side player. He would have to use up 2 GFI to position himself in a good spot. Whatever you can do to make your opponent make more rolls is probably a great idea.

**Weaknesses:** All players are exposed, no one is really save. Three openings allow plenty of space for receivers to swoop through everywhere. Stopping one of them from scoring should be very

difficult.

Strength: .The opponent will have a very hard time stalling in your half. It is a good setup to force him to score more quickly or to take the ball from him what is usually what you want. (But more about that in the strategy part.)

#### d) Anti-Bash-Setups



There are less extreme and many hybrid solutions to this but you get the idea. The point is to stand far enough back to make it hard for the opponent to even blitz you or at least to be far enough back to blitz you with a particular player or to at least make him sweat on some GFI. Typical example is dealing with the four Tomb Guardians of a Khemri Team by falling 4 or 5 Squares behind to be just out of their reach.

Weakness: Too far behind to utilize on a Kick-Off-Event: Blitz or anything that goes wrong during the opponents turn. If the opponent doesn't come to you, you'll end up either just standing there waiting while bad things happen around you or having to approach him head on anyways eventually. Frontline players are abandoned.

strength: Very low vulnerability.

### e) Anti One-Turn-Score Setups

#### ***aa) Standard Last Turn Setup***



The risk of an unnatural one turn score usually occurs during the last turn of a half and you really just don't want to let this happen. The chance for such actions to work is low and the fallout too big to try in regular play so the last turn is really what you have to watch out for.

The standard unnatural one turn is a threat posed by a player of a speed of ma6 or faster who utilizes on chain-pushes to get a player into scoring range. A realistic chance only exists for players of a speed of ma8 or higher. Examples can be found here: <https://fumbbl.com/help/OTT>.

The setup here is the setup you will want to use 90% of the time in a last turn since all your valuable players will be out of reach for a blitz and the straight screen you form will force your opponent to make a couple of nasty dodges if he should get into scoring range. Please be aware that if you are one player down you can't properly hold a screen like that because you will only be able to cover each side with one player making for some slightly easier rolls to get past. In that case you may want to go for another approach, I'll discuss in a minute.

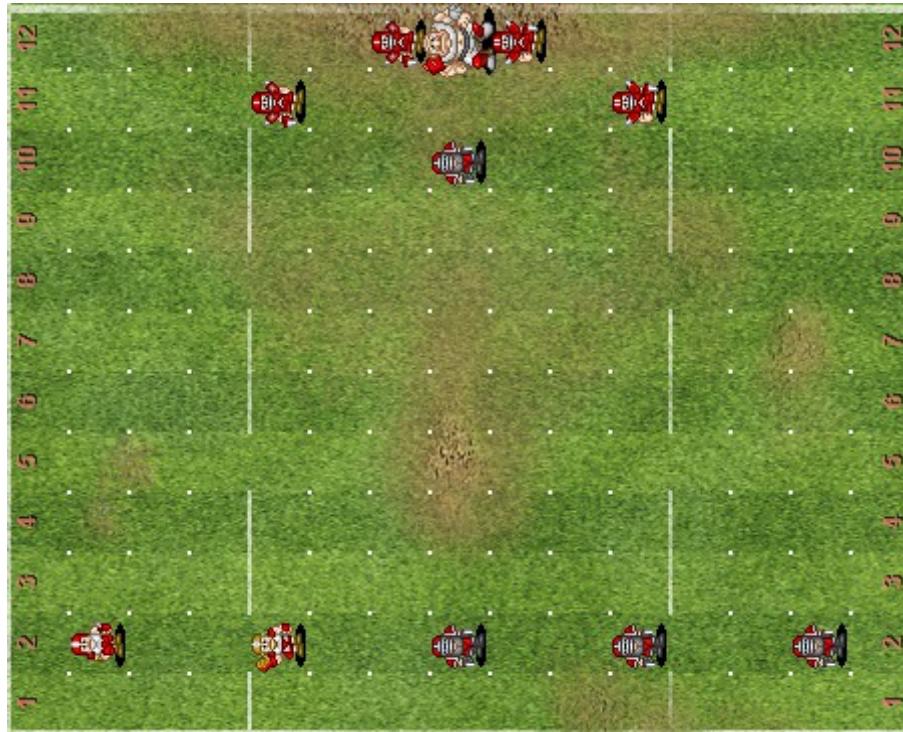
Now, the **2-Square-Distance** of the players at the front is very important. If you have checked the one turn strategies from the link I can't cover here you will notice that they heavily utilize on 3 players standing adjacent to each other. You will find such setups being used quite often simply for the laziness of your opponents to care enough.

Note: If you have 3 Stand Firmer/ Side Stepper for the frontline, you can put them on the frontline and easily reduce your opponents scoring chances to 0.

Weakness: One turn score is still a possible threat.

strength: Minimal exposure of players. Very low risk for health and survival.

## **bb) Advanced Anti Scoring**



The purpose of builds like this is to prevent the opponent to swoop in from below and to push somebody upwards. The price however to make this possible is to use up three players from below that could be otherwise fielded in the endzone. This setup is most suitable if you have a more endurable frontline in terms of guard / stand firm but just not enough to stop a one turn score. Or if your opponent has really fast players and you can't even afford to have him push somebody just one or two squares. This isn't entirely secure either and it doesn't really work with races that can circumvent tackle-zones somehow. I'll show a way to handle such setups later on in the strategy part.

Notice that it is very important to have the players one square away from the endzone as opposed to directly at the end zone because that just makes for additional dodge the opponent has to overcome to get there.

**Weaknesses:** More open last line. More players and therefore more valuable players can be targeted for blitzes.

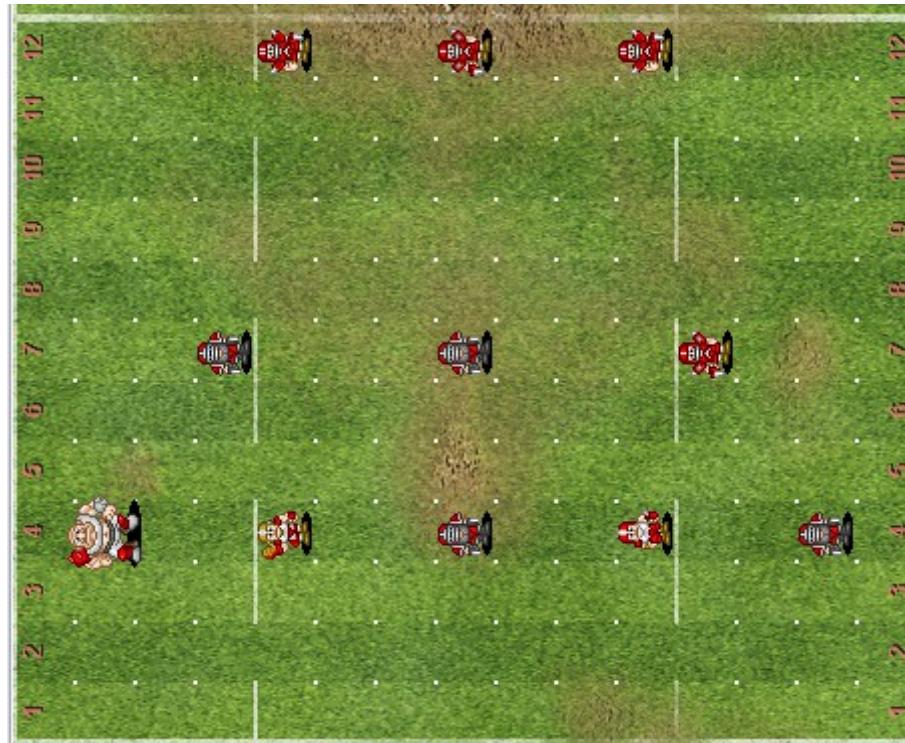
**Strength:** A bit harder to get the initial chain-push going.



This may be a better approach. I'm not really sure. It seems more solid. (The angles below are now physically occupied with players and it is really just impossible to blitz from there.) It feels to me like it is easier to exploit those two for a chain-push but I may be wrong about that. Definitely a

good variant with 2 Stand Firmers and a non Stand Firmer in the middle. Also in both versions be vary of Frenzy since it can push a player from the second line over the line of scrimmage.

### **cc) Anti Throw-Team-Mate Defense**



Handling TTM best is somewhat tricky. You can use the defensive line far back as always. But there are a couple of reasons why you don't have to do this. For one: 5 players are plenty to protect a line against a Stunty because it doesn't make any difference for him to dodge past one or two players. But why move the whole line further to the middle? The point is to simply interfere with the TTM action which is always an inaccurate pass. If the Halfling/Goblin ends up near one of the players it adds +1 to his landing roll. Obviously there are two major risks involved: For one, the opponent may blitz and free a passage. So make absolutely sure that the 5 players standing behind are out of reach for his Blitzers.

For another the TTM player may attempt to throw just over both screens and get lucky. That is an acceptable risk if the opposing player scatters like 3 squares in the wrong direction and ends up landing in a tackle-zone but you shouldn't make it any easier than that. Be aware that your opponent usually will have enough trouble to hand off the ball to the right player to be bothered with blitzing. But you never know, everything is a gamble.

Just to mention the three players further ahead. I placed them 3 squares apart simply because i prefer them to cover the sides a little and to focus and their ability to just stand in the way. The 2 square distance variant has obviously the advantage of forming a full screen and if someone ends up scattering to the middle he is going to be in a really bad spot. Anyways I prefer them just being in the way. After all: if the TTM passes too far to the side, his player might even land outside the pitch.

Last but not least spreading the frontline isn't such an important thing here. The point is to force the opponent to have an additional player ready to perform a block to free up the Big Guy he needs for the TTM or to place him very far at the side what can be a problem for him if your kick off ends on the opposing side of the pitch.

#### **dd) Skink – Defense (with 3 tacklers)**



Skinks need a special chapter on their own. But for completeness I'd like to show a setup against them here. Since they are Stunty there is little point in locking the endzone with a 2 player build up. Instead you can focus on giving the opponent a choice: Either run into the few Tacklers I have, or dodge through more tackle-zones. Works even better with 4 tacklers. This strategy is also valid to handle 1 turn scorers. which variant is better in that case I can't really tell but you won't usually have enough tacklers and players for that anyways.

#### **f) Special Defenses**

##### **aa) Nose Bleed Defense**



Many things could be said about this pathetic defense but I'll try to narrow it down to: It usually hurts. I'll discuss later how to deal with such a thing but for now I want to discuss its actual strategical value. The reason why I call this Nose Bleed Defense lies in its obvious purpose. It is very easy to knock every single guy in this line down. But it takes a lot of rolls. So we discussed odds before and you should know what huge difference the absence or presence of Block makes in those. So if you have to perform 9 2dice blocks per turn without block you can figure odds are that this might end in a turnover. You could use such a setup when your rookie Humans had to

deal with lets say a chaos team and you might win because you use it. You still won't see many good coaches ever use it just because it is so destructive in terms of long term team development. Basically you put your face right in front of your opponents fist and hope he breaks his arm trying to bash your nose in.

Apart from that there can be a significant value the very moment you have a massive numerical advantage on the pitch. Basically the game is over but your opponent has one last chance and he is a sneaky guy. If he has like 5 strength 3 players left and he has to put three of his players in the middle and needs a fourth player to do the pick up, such a defense will seriously put him in trouble. To be able to evaluate the situation correctly and to determine whether or not your opponent will be able to handle the line however is very important. Because if you wrongly assume he won't be able to handle your line you'll just get a lot of bloody noses.

There is another problem with this defense. The players are all very close to the middle. So the moment there is punched a hole somewhere between the players, receivers can rush through and if they are quick they won't be even in your reach!

### ***bb) Superpower Gangsta Khemri/Ogre Defense***

In general whenever you think you can build a line too strong for your opponent to overcome it is a good idea to do it. That is, assuming that you are right. Odds are you are probably not and that he is going to find a way to really hurt you for trying. But more about this later.

### **g) Asymmetrical Defenses**

It is needless to say that the point of asymmetry is rather limited at first glance. Simply put: If you present two sides where one side is defended weaker than the other, the opponent will go for the weaker side. However there are a couple of reasons when this is unavoidable. For example if you are outnumbered and don't have the players to create symmetry or more likely because your players simply have differing stats. If you have for instance a single stand firmer you might want to use him to lock one side up while you put more players on the other side to cover it more properly.

Another way to utilize on asymmetry is to lure the opponent in on one side and to have very fast and speedy players ready on the other that can dive in as support.

### **h) Other Defenses**

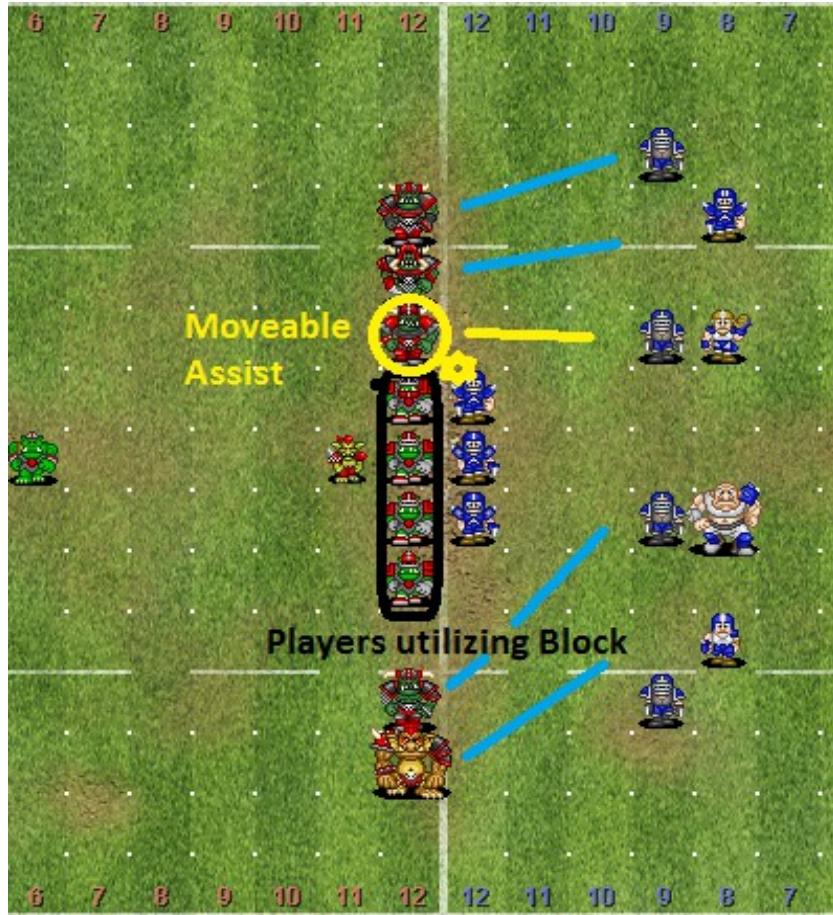
There are countless other ways to set up your line that are all more or less valid and I can't discuss them all here. I think if you have read this part you should be able to use any sort of defense and be able to determine what weaknesses it has and if it is going to help you or not.

## **2. Offensive Setups**

An offense will usually mostly react to a defense. As a general rule of thumb you can say: You want all your players to be positioned the way you would want them to stand if you had just done your turn. If you for example have to move somebody to your frontline just to get an assist if he could have stood there in the first place, you are wasting your players because he could have been used for something else.

So I'll just put this in two parts, frontline and backyard.

## a) Frontline

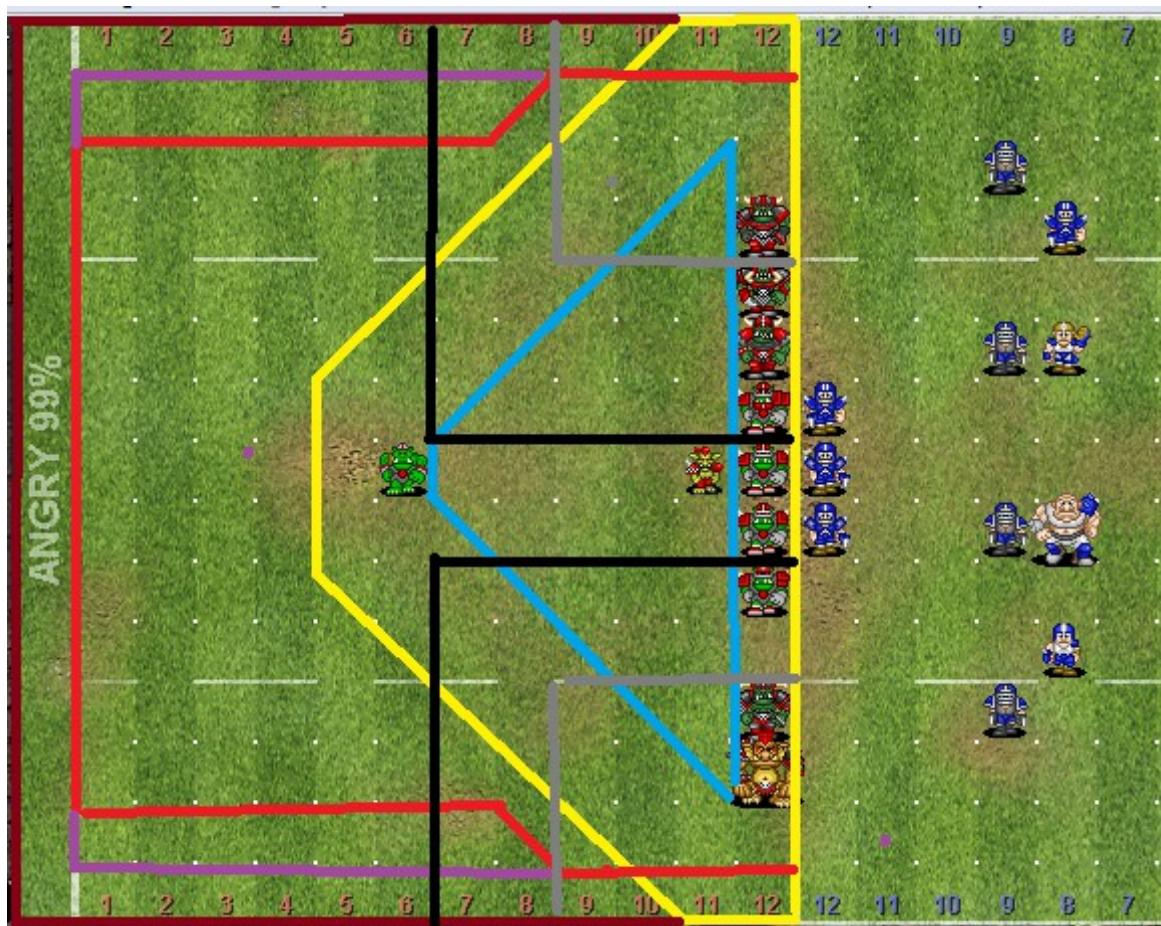


This is a pretty standard example how you may want to build your offense. As you can see in your offense you just want to have all your players out there, ready to start punching some faces. That's how I do it anyways, but there are a couple of problems with that. But more about this later. Let it just be said that you really build this up with your first turn in mind.

Now pay some short attention to my notes. As you see i have a couple of Black Orc Blockers with St4 but I rather use the Blitzers to knock down the frontline simply to avoid the higher fail chance from not having Block. The assist to get on the same strength as the BOBs is easy enough to get. As you can see by the blue lines drawn, the st4 players will actually get in some brawl with the Blitzers. That is not how i usually like to play with most races but Orcs are really a uniquely strong team and Humans are uniquely weak. Bottom line is: If you have a st4 and you can put him up against a st3 and ideally even find a way to cover his flanks: Don't hesitate to do it.

## b) Backyard

Bringing everyone to the front has many disadvantages. But lets begin with the most obvious one: The backyard is disbanded. Nobody is here. Only one lonesome Passer and he happens to be a ma5. Isn't that a really dumb idea to set up like this? Maybe it is. But its the standard way to set up with any faster race. So lets look at it more in detail.



The goal of thrower should be as soon as possible to get to the ball, pick it up and meet up with the rest of the team so that they can build a nice cage around him and the Orcs can do their stalling thing they love so much to do. As long as the thrower is isolated he is in serious danger because he is slow and unagile and doesn't have anything that would help him out being alone. Other races have less of a problem there but that just makes Orcs a better example race.

Now lets look at the blue area: If the ball lands within that area it should be no problem for the passer to make it to the frontline within the same turn and build a cage there. If the ball ends up there and you manage to pick it up its all good.

The yellow area gives you an idea where you could pick up and build a cage but would maybe need to utilize GFI or have some of your Orcs walk backwards.

The red zone allows you to pick up with little effort but you won't make it to the frontline. I overlapped it with parts of yellow line beyond which you maybe can build a cage but you'll still be in a bad spot, IE at the side.

The purple zone finally symbolizes the area you can only reach with GFI, it won't allow you to cage but at least it isn't the sideline. Needless to say that the ball ending up at the walls somewhere is really bad. Imagine you fail the pick up. It could scatter anywhere. And then your opponents turn starts and who do you got back there anyways?

The black line shows the extend of the reach of the Human Blitzers in this example. Be aware that they are placed a good bit behind and could go easily much further with another setup. Also other races utilize on much faster players that can make much larger ground. Anyways, The area in the middle between the two black lines is also reachable for the Blitzers but it isn't that easy to do for them. The entire backyard area is unreachable and the area marked in gray is accessible to the Blitzers without having to make any further rolls. On the Kick-Off-Event: Blitz, if the ball was to end up in the gray areas, the Humans would be easily able to control the ball. So this also gives you a pretty good idea why you rather want to kick in the short corner using the Kick skill even if the kick far back might be a problem to retrieve.

So the point is: If the ball falls in the red area, you won't end up in a secured position but at least your opponent can't get to the ball for now either.

In any case if something like that happens you really have to shift your focus from moving forward to moving backwards because otherwise the Humans might outrun the rest of your team to take the passer on in a 4 on 1 and make him potentially even pass. You don't want to pass. If you have to pass you are doing something wrong and I'm not just talking Orcs here. I talk any race.

But lets have a look at what difference speed can make.



In this picture we see a Human team with a Passer and a Catcher standing back. The light blue area marks in which area the ball would have to land for the Passer to be able to pick it up and build a cage in the middle without help of GFI.

The dark blue area marks the same area for the catcher who is closer to the mid-line and has a longer way if he has to run back and forth. This is just to demonstrate to you how important movement can be. However forming a cage is not as important for Humans so early on because a Human cage is much less secure. It just lacks players that can provide some stability. In addition

single players do better on their own. But even if you hang back for a turn longer, you will have to eventually utilize on caging tactics anyways. There is just no way around it.

So, since we have covered that. What alternatives do we have for the backyard for a slow team?



This here would be a variant of minimum precaution usually related to handling the Kick skill. In this variant the upper sides are still exposed but one of the Blitzers from the middle could be used to stabilize the sides if the ball shifts too much in one of the directions there.



This one is an old school classic. The goblin covers one side, the passer the other. In older times people would sometimes use two passers for such a strategy. It has the advantage that either of them will make it to the middle by the end of turn 2. The goblin is actually better at carrying in many respects. Except for that he has no inbuilt re-roll in Sure Hands. As you can see these things are often about getting a little more chance out of these early pick up actions because if one of those fails it just means a world of trouble.

So more likely you are going to want to use 4 or 5 players in the back until you have a decent skilled carrier. That is especially true for Orcs since they are just that slow. And if you happen to have to run backwards you already got the support ready:



Could be many other variants. You rather would want somebody else than 2 bobs as supporters up there. Some ag3 that could pick up the ball if necessary but in this case the team is just lacking the

necessary ag3 base. (The three other Blitzers have to remain at the frontline because you really need them to do the blocks. Do NOT use the bobs unless they have Block. )

### c) Using A Better Offense / To Be Prepared

A major flaw in all the offensive setups I have used so far is that they entirely don't bother with the scenarios of the Kick-Off-Events: Blitz and Perfect Defense. Those two are always going to be your biggest obstacle in winning your drive. So, if you are in a good spot and don't really have other worries you may rather want to focus on prioritizing to defend against those events.



Orcs are truly a magnificent race. Just look how tightly they can close up both sides. Now this is more of a defense against blitzes. But it does OK well against Perfect Defense too, especially if the other race is weaker. If you are weaker you may want to take a step back with some of your guys here.

The really good news is, that this is really a solid way to start up into the half because although the passer is again the only one left behind, if you just hold the line you can probably get the Passer back to the middle before any of the Humans can break through and reach him.

This is all I am going to say about this kind of setups and just keep in mind that they are situational and that there are a lot of things you need to consider.

I'll put some more setups into the strategy part since they are just part of playing the game.

## IV. Tactics

### 1. Offensive Play

The first turn is usually the expense of the offensive setup, therefore it is only logical to continue here.

Lets set some main objectives first: 1. Secure the ball and fortify its position. 2. Tare the opponents frontline apart. 4. Cause further havoc with a blitz. 5. Get a player in scoring range.

Those are pretty much the standard considerations you have to go through in a first turn. The order of actions here is prioritized based on importance but in reality you will often finish with doing the ball action last, simply because it is the least likely one to succeed. But remember that ball actions serving to secure the ball prior to the pick up do not require a roll and can be done first. The risk-less so called 'move-actions'. I advise you to fall back on this row of actions if you are not sure about the fail-chances of certain rows of actions.

Anyhow taking into account what *usually* has the highest success chance, we get this order of actions:

1. If the ball is accessible to the opponent, move free players next to the ball. In the event of a turnover a pickup will be harder for him. This is unnecessary if the opponent can't reach the ball but if your ball-carrier is slow moving you might have somebody ready for this task anyways. Do not yet attempt the pick up since it is not likely to succeed. If you use an ag4 team and have a Re-Roll ready for the action you may want to attempt a pick up after securing the ball. However, making 2-dice blocks first is preferable since you can re-roll them.
2. If it is easy to do, move a cheap player into scoring range without rolling anything.
3. Perform as many 2-dice blocks with Block as possible.
4. Find an appropriate target for a blitz and most likely you will want to put an assist on him.
5. Perform the blitz and use the Blitzer or another cheaper player to get into scoring range if there isn't already a player. If your blitz might result in more critical rolls, you'll want to wait till after picking up and securing the ball.
6. Further secure your ball position with freed up players from the frontline.
7. Attempt a pick-up or execute the minimum necessary 2d-blocks without block you have to do in the order you prefer.
8. Use any free player left to make your position as secure as possible.
9. If you have to perform 1d-blocks or dodges, now is the time to do it.
10. If its necessary now would be the time to foul. Usually it won't be necessary, so just do nothing and end your turn. Ideally you made it without a turn-over.

This order of actions is true in all turns but of particular relevance during the first turn. Please don't be robotic about it. Bashy teams may want to use more time in approaching the enemy than in security to get the best probable outcome. But those are special cases. Most of the time you will be better off staying on distance from your opponent.

I'll now go through the steps with you doing a detailed analysis.

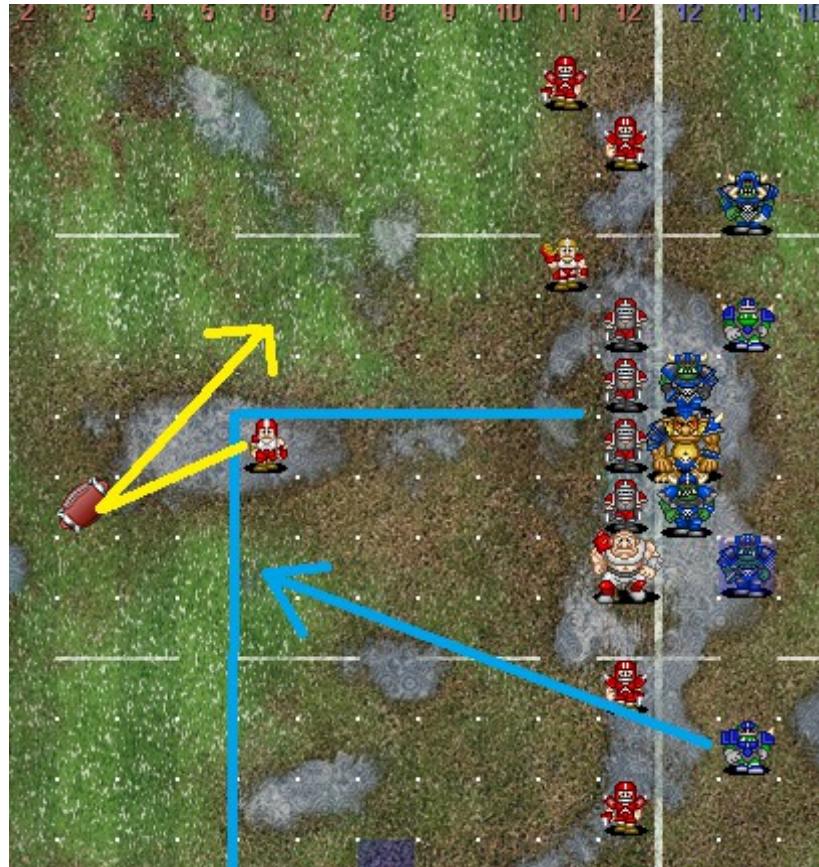
#### a) Securing the ball

If you set up well, you will usually not have to use any players up for this. Please remember

that you only have 11 players available and you have to plan for both scenarios: that you suffer a turn over and that you will manage the pick-up later into the turn. After the pick-up the situation on the pitch shifts and you may want to use your players for another purpose. So keep in mind: A successful turn is much about player management. Use the tackle-zone and the assist of the unmoved player to your advantage.

Lets have a look at the most common ball landing scenarios:

### **aa) The ball lands in the back field**



This happens more than half of the time and is commonly not a reason for concern. In this scenario the upper flank is shut but the lower flank can be blitzed open. The blue area shows about what area a Blitzer can reach if somebody rolls a Pow on the blitz against the lineman.

Since the passer is ag3 he should avoid ending up even in a tackle-zone of a Blitzer. But since that is next turns problem you, shouldn't really take too much risk for that now.

Bottom line is: The ball is out of the dangerous area, the ball carrier can make his way back closer to the line of scrimmage and stay out of harms way.

The linemen in the middle are already positioned well to stop an opponents advance so there is no point in putting them out of position.

Result: Further securing the ball is not necessary. Just leave everything as it is and start blocking.

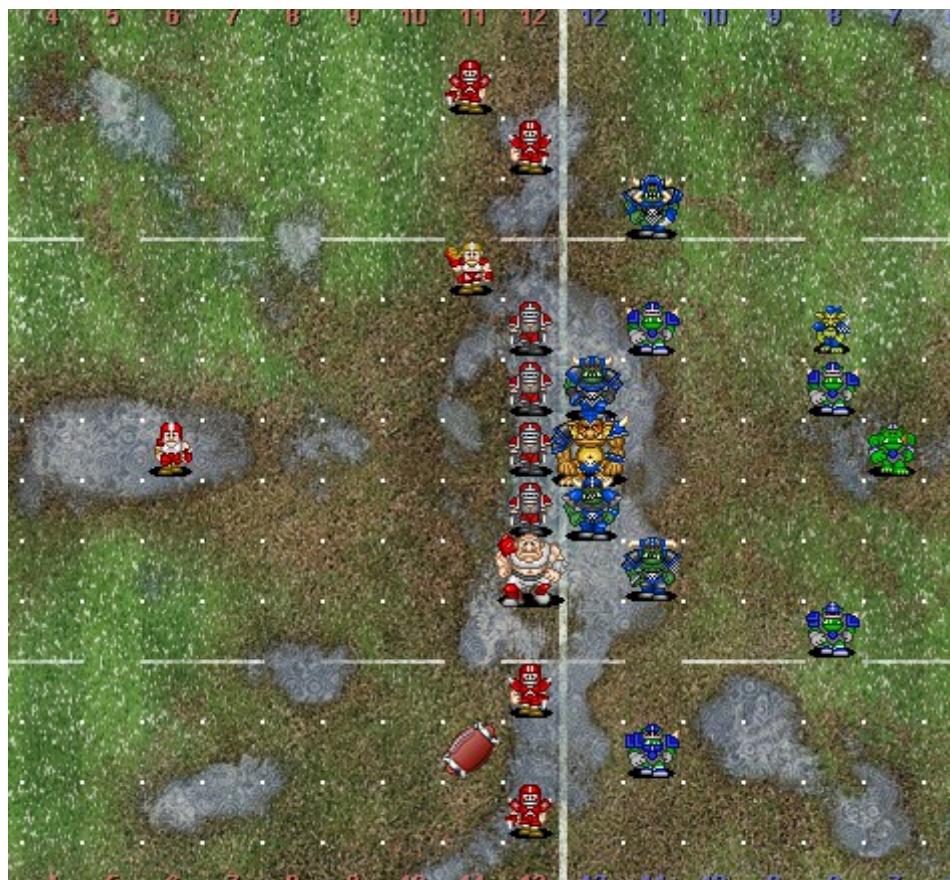
**bb) Ball lands behind secured flank**



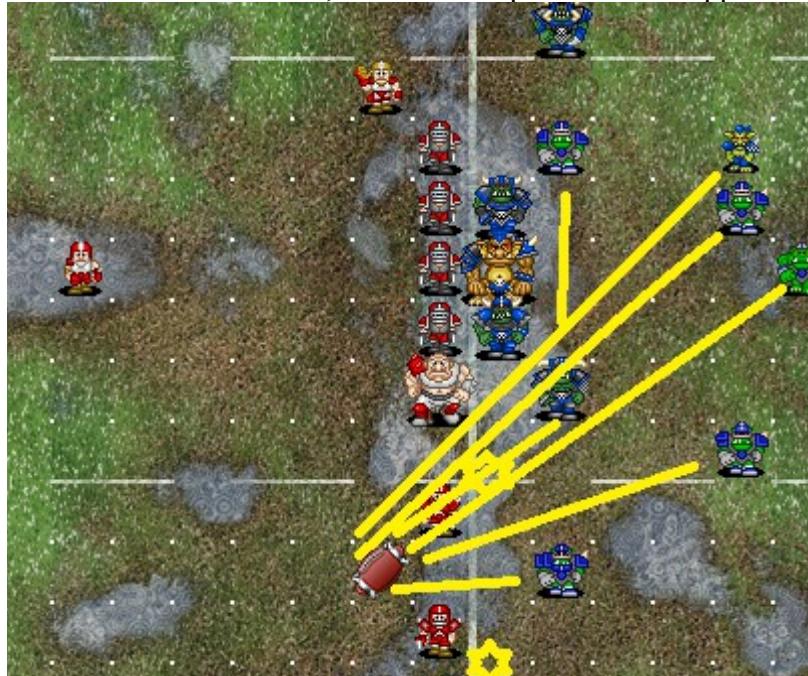
This scenario is not much different from the first one. Even with a blitz it would be impossible to get through to the ball. All that is left to do is an attempt for the pick-up.

Result: No additional effort in securing the ball is necessary. Focus on step 2.

**cc) Ball lands behind an unsecured flank**



This is a very dangerous situation even against slow moving teams. Assuming one of the two players adjacent to the ball can be taken out, the Orcs can pour a lot of support in.



Best case scenario a big brawl is created and you will have to fight for getting the ball back. The problem in this picture is that you don't have anybody near who can really help out securing the ball. However the catcher on the other side is fast enough to give a bit more stability.

Solution: Move the catcher on the other side.



The two question marks symbolize two alternate resting places where the catcher may want to stop. The place right at the frontline is the best option for him here. The frontline would be shut pretty tightly and the ball would be hard to obtain. The problem is that even if nothing goes wrong the catcher makes himself vulnerable to blitzes there. Losing him early on in the game just to secure the position may come back to haunt you later. The other question mark shows how to best circle the ball. If the catcher stands there it would be very hard to pick up the ball but if it scatters in the wrong direction, it may end up with the Orcs.

In this example I decided to go with the middle square. It stabilizes the inner lineman the best and forces the Orcs to blitz the outer lineman to get to the ball. The advantage of that is that only a few of the Orcs can walk past such a distance and if they would happen to get the ball it could be probably re-obtained after that. It is by no means a secure solution but it keeps the catcher save and is a bit of a help in improving the odds towards your favor.

**dd) Ball lands behind the frontline in the middle**



That is usually a very secure spot. The opponent could dive in from the unsecured side but would find a lot of resistance at the frontline. The best approach here is to do the frontline actions to free the players up that stand there. This will help to secure and stabilize the ball best. If the ball ends here and you have a completely open side, move one or two of your lineman to form a provisional cage behind the ball:



Solution: Either build a cage or relax and proceed to step 2

### **ee) Ball ending up in the endzone**



A ball ending up at the sides or in the end zone needs immediate attention. A failed pick up here would have severe consequences. In this example the passer is barely even in reach. If he would happen to be rendered immobile or even be taken out, the ball would be entirely out of range. The Orcs could easily be there first with a couple of quick sprints.

If the passer would move to the ball but fail the pick up, he could end up getting pushed off the pitch. (Keep in mind that although the opponent is out of reach you may still suffer a turn over in the follow up turn and you are generally under severe pressure to move players at the side first. That is bound to mess with your probability game order.)

Solution: Lock one side shut so that you can retreat there later. Move all players from the other side towards the middle. They will be essential support. Once you freed up more players move them also towards the middle. It doesn't hurt to also move somebody in scoring range to draw attention on him. The way back is long and you should make sure you have plenty support.

### **ff) Ball ends at the Sideline**

Similar conditions apply as with the ball in the endzone. You need to seriously secure the ball position and get the hell out of there.

### **gg) Touchback, who to give the ball to?**

In case of a touch back you usually want to hand the ball to the carrier you placed for that purpose in the backfield middle. You might be tempted to hand it to someone further ahead. But unless you have to score very quickly because you are running out of turns there is little point. Securing the ball is your priority. Move the carrier in a secure location and provide cover for him before starting any other rolls.

Solution: Hand the ball to the ball-carrier and move him towards the middle of the pitch where he should be well secured. (Watch out for leapers. If there are any you might want to stand back.)

## b) Move a player into scoring range

Something you will usually only see in games between top coaches is the awkward receiver standing alone and forgotten in range to score. While the rest of both teams are fighting it out on the line of scrimmage.

If you want to score it is quite obvious that you have to bring somebody in range to score first. Since your carrier should be protected and you will have problems to move him with your entire squad ahead without rolling dice, it is quite obvious that this is important.

On the other hand you'll find that a single player is usually overrun. So why even bother? And maybe (probably) you want to stall anyways, so you'll wonder: Why bother with bringing a player in range?

For one it is good to have options in a game of chance. You can't predict how the game will look like once your opponents turn is over. It is always better to score than to remain in a state where you could lose the ball.

For another if your opponent decides to take that player out, it will usually cost him 2 of his own players to make a blitz. That relieves pressure he can put on the line of scrimmage. Maybe you'll be able to move your entire squad forward instead.

The player in range will be probably the target of a blitz.

Therefore the player in scoring range should be ideally one of little value to you with decent enough agility to be able to score if he has to. A loner can be OK as a temptation for that but lets be serious: You and your opponent both know you'll not risk a hand-off to a loner.

If your opponent decides to ignore the guy (like the pros do), it is still good for you because you retain that scoring option as an actual possibility. In addition you can use the player to move on critical places on the map that couldn't be reached otherwise.

## c) Two-Dice-Blocks

### aa) Handling the Frontline

I think I made this clear in the probability part but I'll write it here again:

Players with Block are the center stone of any proper blocking and blitzing. Players without Block just can't make the job. It doesn't matter if they are St4 or St5 or even St7. If they don't have it they fail 1/9 instead of 1/36. That is too much. (In case of 3d-blocks it's 1/27. - The probability part should explain everything about that.)

Guarders are to be placed in the middle. They are offensively more useful than defensively because you get to decide in which order to blitz and block. Of course if only your opponent has guarders, you'll be lost in a crowd.

It is usually better to make a 1d-block with Block on the line on some player to get a 2d block on somebody else than to ignore it. Just because you want to give your opponent a good scare and not appear weak. Do whatever to figure out a way to get those frontliners down but remember that it also can backfire if you fail something. So find a good balance in setting priority between getting the ball up and handling the line. If you don't want to take the risk you might as well put a Dodger against the lot. Don't just let them untouched because then the line is moveable on a blitz-event and they are too close to your half not to get you in serious trouble.

If your opponent goes for a full defense with lots of players on the line you may want to distribute

your players in a way that they cover one side with 2 dice blocks and the other with a dodger to stop them from doing something in case of a blitz. If you don't have a player with proper agility, just let it go and dedicate to one side.

### ***bb) Other Blocks***

In general you get assists where you don't have some. move a player to the aid of another player in need. If necessary even 2. Keep in mind that you need enough players left in the end to form a cage. Best is if you can double utilize them for support and as part of a cage. If you don't have any players left to assist, there are maybe ways to Dodge or Blitz to get someone free and support somewhere else. Remember to uphold the order of actions in that case. The general case will be that if everybody is in a tackle-zone you will have to dodge with one half to support the other half, allowing them to do 2-dice blocks. Who you should use to dodge and who to block should not only be decided by who has the Block skill but also who is next to multiple opponents and who is just next to one. You don't want to end up in a crowd if you already have to dodge around.

In the end follow the strategy that seems to suggest the highest chance of success.

### **d) Blitzing**

Besides strategical blitzing there is a lot of merit in simply targeting someone for carnage. Never give up, injuries may take their time to show but if you keep it up, there will be some traces of damage eventually. Target the opponents key-players and those with little armor. Don't force things by targeting Blodgers if you don't have Tackle. Unless your opponent has a large roster, really getting rid of any player will help. If your opponents roster is large, you may want to avoid easy to replace unskilled players as blitzing targets.

Strategically on offense your priority should be to get the carrier free if tagged. Blitzing somebody next to the carrier is favorable to a dodge even if the dodger has only a 1/36 fail chance because you can re-roll the Block and you can't re-roll the dodge and you might lose the ball if you fail.

Next priority is to create openings. There need to be sufficient space for a cage. There need to be enough players free to build a cage. A blitz might spare you a dodge here. Remember that a secure cage needs to take your absolute priority.

Finally you may want to blitz a path free to the endzone for a player from your team to slip through or even to move the entire cage through. Usually your opponent will give up on attempts of completely blocking you off once one of your guys made it through.

### **e) Secure your position**

You essentially have to always account for both situations, that you fail the pick-up and that you succeed the pick up. That you fail to dodge with the ball and that you succeed to dodge with the ball. That you fail the pass and that you succeed the pass. But be aware that the precautions should also reflect on their likeliness. If you only prepare for failure you won't be able to advance yourself in a way that you are able to keep up with your opponent. It's OK to take some risks as long as you do it within a mindset of avoiding risk.

You must at least take enough risk every turn to make sure that your ball carrier is save and can't be blitzed from any angle. If you haven't secured that, you have to take more risk. Never stop, never give up before that isn't assured. Best is you archive that without risk, but if you can't just do more.

## f) Fouling

Fouling requires a couple of parameters to be right. You need to have a replaceable player available. Reading up on *General Strategy* in regard to player numbers might help here. Offensively your main targets will be anyone who could threaten your offense on his own, any CPOMBer and any player that could make your own next defense impossible. IF you have replacements you can foul pretty much anybody by turn 7 but be sure its at least somebody your opponent can't replace.

## 2. Defensive Play

On defense you usually have much less to consider. Essentially you cover your key players, do your blitz and hope for your opponent to mess up.

The first opportunity for him to do that is usually right after the kick-off. He didn't have time to form a cage yet and his carrier has probably picked up and is isolated. You could now send a larger amount of players into his half and try to pressure him or you could wait for him to come closer. Waiting has the advantage that you don't have to use up your Re-Rolls yet and you'll get some time to keep your team alive. You still can react to anything that happens.

If you approach him the game will go quicker. The pressure you put in might result in him having trouble holding on to the ball. It might get loose or it might get under your control. Either way, you'll probably lose a couple of Re-Rolls. Once he escapes, there will be little resistance from you and he'll be home free.

If you take that risk has to be really a case to case decision. You can't ignore good odds if you want to reliably win games. If your opponent plays solid, you'll might have problems to ever penetrate his cage later. By the time he gets into your half with his cage, it is time to start a full assault. Ideally the pressure will either result in him scoring or losing the ball. If he loses the ball in your half, you'll have more variants to escape from him and still protect your own TD line.

### 3. A more practical example of Offense



Orcs are one of the most difficult teams for Humans to handle. This makes this match-up ideal to show how a regular offense can be played.

Note: This isn't an actual game. It merely serves educational purposes. The dice rolls and dice results however, have been authentic. It is assumed that the Human team comes with an amount of 4 Re-Rolls here, the Orcs with 3. This part of the game isn't elaborated or reflected upon because the Re-Roll count could not be fully re-created within the constraints of the client. The actions taken should still reflect on that count. Dices re-rolled are not shown unless relevant.

#### a) Strategy

First we start with general considerations:

The Orc team has a lot more strength. In a scrum there is little chance for the Humans to win. The Humans also don't have any significant capabilities to dodge. Their armor is lower, but they are a little bit faster. From of the standard ways to play discussed in the *General Strategy* section the Rock-Steady-Play seems therefore like the best variant to go. However, there is no need to hurry and we can wait and see how efficient the Orcs will play before we make a final decision on whether to abandon the Standard Strategy.

#### b) Setup

In this game the Humans only have 3 Blitzers. Therefore I opted to not try to eliminate the entire frontline and to ignore the Troll. He is still tagged, because I don't want him to walk around on a blitz and limit his operational range. However, the Human lineman who tags him is misplaced. I'll explain in a minute why.

Giving up the frontline is generally not a good move and beating it up is an excellent way to show your opponent that you mean business. The 1d blocks with Block are relatively safe but yet I'll use my blitz to make space for a second assist on one of those BOBs and allow a 2-dice block from that side. The other BOB will only receive a 1-dice block assuming that everything goes right.

The blitz to place a support player will require 2 support players as well because the only two possible targets for it are both BOBs.

However, I'll not place the supporters directly on the line because they have enough movement to reach the BOB without problems and in case something goes wrong after the kick-off (Perfect Defense for instance) I'll be in a better position to be able to move them in the back field.

Note that you have to make all these considerations during the setup. Once it is done, it is already too late.

### c) Tactics

The ball lands. It lands precisely in the corner where I was planning to hit the BOB. That is a problem because now I have to decide whether I don't rather want to use the players I had reserved for the blitz to cover the ball instead. But on the other hand, if I field those supporters in the path of the BOB they are blocking the path for him and the other Orcs off at the same time. Since I want to cause as much damage as possible, I go for the blitz. I notice that I can't prevent the Blitzer behind the BOB to reach the ball that way, but I'll just find a way to address that after I see the outcome of the blitz. The risk is only 1/36 and I have a Re-Roll, so I should be fine.



#### aa) Execution of the Plan

The yellow numbers show in what order I moved the players.

The blitz turns out to be a push-back but the two blocks on the front-line are a complete success. Both BOBs there hit the ground. The Catcher covers the flank to protect from the Orc Blitzer. That is a bit of a tricky decision because AV7 makes for a juicy target. But in this case the catcher happens to have Block. If the Orcs were to go for him they might easily waste their blitz. In retrospective I might be better off to put the Catcher in the position of the Lineman moved second but it is already too late and the reason why I initially avoided that spot was because he has too much exposure there and won't be of as much help being St2. On the other hand he happens to be a

Blodger. Otherwise I wouldn't be so content about his odds to handle that Blitzer.

### **bb) Odds Vs Importance**

An interesting dilemma is created between the order of the execution of the 1d-block (actions 8 and 9) against the second BOB and the pick up with the passer (action 10). The pick up has a 1/9 (4/36) fail-chance, compared to the 1/6 (6/36) fail-chance of the block. If I end up without the pick-up and without any player even standing next to the ball AND the Orc Blitzer in range of the ball with only an St2 player between him and retrieving it, I might end up in a world of trouble. On the other hand I have to be careful. This frontline business I started is serious. The Orcs are much stronger and can easily negate all my tackle-zones if I give them the time to do it. But in the end it is really no hard decision at all because: For the 1d-block I still have a Re-Roll. If I happen to use it there, the passer still has Sure Hands. There is really no way to improve the odds for the passer and the fail chance for the block with re-roll is 1/36, therefore 4 times as likely to succeed as the pick up.

### **cc) To act or not to act**

You maybe notice already why the Lineman next to the Troll would have been better placed in the middle. We'll find out in the Orcs turn. Theoretically I could dodge with that player and place him correctly but there is no guarantee for success, the dodge might injure the player and I'd be off worse than doing nothing. If I had planned my setup better I could have avoided this. I rather have him just stand there and immobilize the Troll. With all my other players out of tackle-zones I feel good about the situation and end my turn.

### **d) What it means to be stronger**



The Orcs mean serious business. Due to the sheer supremacy they don't really have to worry about anything. They can just as well shut the humans off entirely. Note that this is not a tactic I have recommended much in this book so far. Usually you don't want to go so much into somebody's face. You could call it war, but it is more sheer utter domination. At the upper flank there are 2 superior BOBs against 2 lineman, completely outmachtet. In the center we have 3 Orc players take 1 Blitzer

on. Only the middle of the three holds a lineman. So, if the Blitzer is going to block somebody it's either the player in the strategical position of the least value or he won't get much out of his own Block skill.

We have the lower flank with a BOB and a Blitzer to shut the side off. Opposed to them are two human linemen. To crush any hopes for the humans one of those two linemen is being blitzed by yet a third Blitzer. Now we have a no good for anything Loner on the ground, unable to assist. A Catcher who can't blitz on par and a lineman against a BOB and the Blitzer who did the blitz. Of course the Blitzer is stuck where he was and it would make little sense to risk a dodge roll and get out of the spot where he is, but he doesn't have to because it is a nice spot to be in.

So who is left? The ball-carrier, but the humans can't really put him into action because if he gets in trouble they are done. Then there is a second loner who is supposed to create mild cover for the carrier and the players in the middle.

And here we get to see the devastation of placing the lineman for the Troll in the wrong square. The Troll blocks, rolls a pushback and follows up. The Troll is now next to three Humans with st3 and next to him is the BOB who just got blocked in the turn before and is now up again on his feet. An st4 and st5 against 3 st3 and here we have yet another example of utter domination.

If the lineman would have been fielded correctly, the Trolls follow up wouldn't have tagged two additional players of the Human team. He'd be 1 on 1 with a st3 lineman and would be out of equation. The three remaining st3 against a single st4. But lets stop dreaming here.

### e) Stronger? Stomp 'em in the nuts!



Some people would panic here but that isn't what we are going to do. Panicking is commonly the path to desaster in Blood Bowl. So we will stay calm. The game has just started.

Since we needed so many assists in the first turn, we didn't have a player left unused to walk into scoring range. So scoring is out of question to begin with. That might be also a reason why the Orcs chose to put up so much pressure. We could go for a desperate score attempt here but lets look for other options. Ideally do a lot of punches. The human lineman at the bottom is pretty much done. It's 3 vs 1 and he better should get out of there. The situation with the Troll is different. He is exposed but it would need 3 players to get a 2-dice block on him.

It would exhaust essentially all the free players I have, not including the carrier. And I'm going to have to disassemble my cage to do it. That means the carrier will be unprotected.

Then again, the odds for the block with the Blitzer to fail is only 1/36 and I have a Re-Roll, so I'm good. But what then? There are other players I need to get down too and the ball-handlers exposure needs to be addressed somehow. In fact, before that isn't done, any other thinking is irrelevant. But let me just show you.



I get the Troll on the ground, good. But the carrier is still exposed. I need to do something. Since there is no place for me to really hide, I'll put the carrier next to the Catcher (dark blue arrow) but I'm by no means save. The Lineman you see in the first picture on the bottom can be easily blocked away. The two Blitzers have sufficient range to reach my carrier on 2 GFI. On the upper side there are the two BOBs against my two st3. If they are taken out there is yet another Orc Blitzer who could slip past everyone else and get to my carrier.

After the block on the Troll I have a player freed up. I decide to use him on the two BOBs on the upper flank and to give the Blitzer a 1d block. It's a pow. The upper side is secured.

I still need to worry about the lower side. There are two Blitzers there and one BOB to move the lineman next to them out of the way. Each of the Blitzers are in 2 GFI range of my carrier (Counting squares is important). Since my carrier has no Block, being blitzed would put me in a very bad spot. Yet, I'm greedy for another 2d-block.

Only the standing player without Loner can really assist anybody. The Loner can get up at best. The standing player provides some minimal cover, because if the BOB only gets a push back, the Orcs will get only one Blitzer in range. And even if they use both Blitzers it will cost them 3 GFI to do it.

I decide that I NEED to dodge with the Loner first and secure the lower flank. It's actually a terrible idea. If by some chance I happen to lose the ball here it will be really hard to recover. And there is a 1 in 3 chance my dodge will fail and my position will worsen like that.

But I'm thinking: The Blitzer who comes for the ball, will be out of position. And that requires for him to succeed in the first place.

I go for the Loner dodge and it works. The lower flank is secured. That is the kind of break I needed to get back into the game.

Now I don't have to worry about my other lineman failing his dodge and he manages to run! There are two spaces to go to, Either in the middle to support the Loner for a block or to use 2 GFI to get a support on the second BOB on the outside.

I still have my RR, so I'm incorrectly worried about the Loner saving him up for a 1d block and do 2 GFI for support against the other BOB. A 1 occurs and there goes my RR. 2d-block on the BOB and he is down. By not supporting against the BOB in the middle I realize that there is only one square left for the BOB to be pushed through. The square I could have moved my player to instead. If I had done that I could have pushed that BOB wherever I wanted. If I push him now, he'll be right between a bunch of my players, one block away from my carrier, probably standing. Or maybe I roll a skull. I swallow my pride and end the turn without blocking.

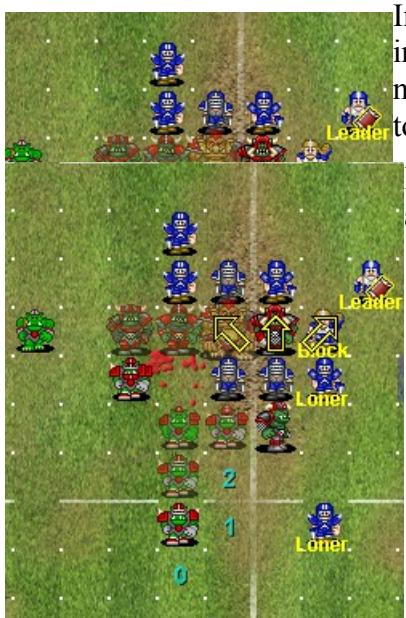
## f) How to chain-push to victory (pure proper Blood Bowl)



The Orc team tries to be smart here and chain-pushes the BOB. Because he can't do it directly he moves a Blitzer in position to have all 3 squares blocked off. Although you normally want multiple push-backs on chain-pushes, the Pow here isn't half bad because there wouldn't be an Orc Player close enough to make a follow up push. There is going to be a blitz-action needed to make it happen. But since the path to my carrier is blocked off entirely, and the BOB will need only a block action against the carrier to get him down, that isn't really an issue.



At this point the Orc coach also needs to worry about how to get to execute a 2-dice-block and whether there will be Humans able to assist the carrier. After all, it is in an area that is quite hard to reach for the Orcs. The Troll has a lot of Humans covered, negating a total of 5 tackle-zones. But the orange marked Catcher is going to be pretty hard to reach. In theory the Orcs could use one of their Blitzers to dodge and GFI either around the left or right flank and give an assist. But overall that would require a ridiculous amount of rolls and put the whole operation in question.



Instead of going for a direct blitz the Orcs decide to remove the Loner in the middle first. The Loner leaves the game, meaning that angle is now bad for chain-pushes. However, the path is free for a BOB now to not only chain-push but also negate the assist of the Catcher.

It's a push-back. But the deed is done . Everybody is in a tackle-zone and the Bob is in range.

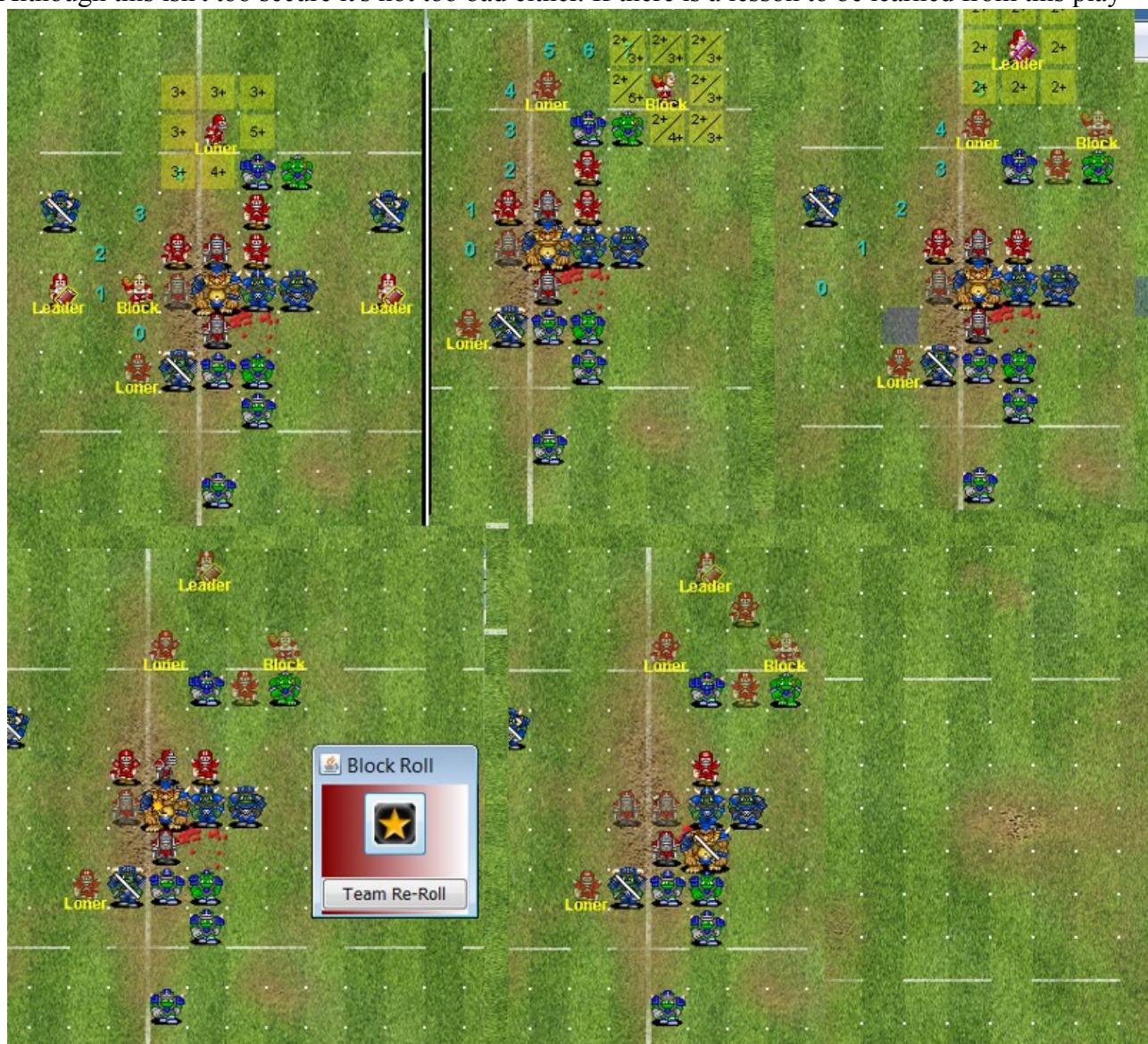


It's a push-back. A re-roll doesn't produce a better result. The Orcs hurry to finish the turn up and provide proper cover against my next actions with the Humans.

### g) It Doesn't Matter how Non-Standard and Crappy it Looks



Although this isn't too secure it's not too bad either. If there is a lesson to be learned from this play



is that it is really not important to properly cage all the time. All the situations are different and what matters is that your carrier can't be reached by an opponent player. So look at this closely. The

Blitzer sort of can -2d the Loner but there are a bunch of human players behind him. A BOB from there would barely make range. The players further behind have even less chances. The Blitzer next to the Loner could get help from a BOB. with the removal of that lineman in his back he could reach the carrier with a dodge and 2 GFI. It would never be an overwhelmingly strong play because the Orcs would pretty much sacrifice their position entirely if it fails.

Anyways,



this should take care of it.

Note that I didn't really need to get him down here. A push-back & follow up would have basically disabled the 2 BOBs with my Blitzer and the Lineman. A skull wouldn't have made a huge difference either.

### **h) Stalling on defense?**



The Orcs are still in control of this game. There is little point in worrying too much about lost chances. The main issue to them is now that they are out positioned. They need the time to reposition and get back in the game. Although a human TD wouldn't really hurt them since there is enough time to score back, there is no real reason to give the Humans this opportunity in light of the Orcs overwhelming superiority. It's not that certain to get an offense through after all.

The biggest obstacle to slowing the game down here is the receiver who happens to be the only one in scoring range. So they do:



The original objective is here to chainpush the BOB in range to get to the carrier. However, that requires that the Blodge-Catcher is going down. If he was down, the BOB could use his blitz to reach the lineman next to the ag3 carrier and put him into a tackle-zone. A place that is uncomfortable to escape from. On the other hand it is hard to get a Blodger down. In the given example it may be better to just neglect that plan and to blitz the Catcher straight instead of trying to get him down with the Orc Passer. The Orc Passer in turn blocks first, fails to roll a Pow pushes him away and as a result the BOB has to perform an additional potentially fatal GFI to blitz him from the angle he does in the final picture. And you can see pretty much why he uses that angle: If there was a push back again, he'd be standing right next to the passer and in a very convenient spot to escape at the side. Of course the following pictures will close that gap but they involve even more rolls. Lets have a look:



Depending on philosophy it could be argued here that the Orcs take too many risks doing all these GFI. The problem is that you have to get to a certain stage in the game to establish some sort of security. The decision to slow the game down while being on Defense is a risky one. When this path is taken you have to somewhat make sure that your opponent isn't pulling a fast one on you or you'll end up with a 0:1 score at the end of your half time and it is almost impossible to recover from that. Therefore it makes sense to risk additional GFI to reinforce the situation. It should be said that there is a huge difference whether you still have a RR at your disposal or not. Once that is gone, you really have to be incredibly careful with your actions and consider how well you can handle getting prone on the face. Also think about it in advance whether you really want to invest a RR if something goes wrong and base your decisions on the probability you get after you have decided whether or not you can spare it for this turn. After all you don't want to run out of RR late in the half.

The Orcs conclude with a risky and unnecessary block that has a pow chance of 75% (27/36) but only results in a push back. As a result a human lineman is pushed near range to score. Although his position is not really that great.

### i) Breaking Through?



Meanwhile I'm on a crossroad here. I have multiple options to play it. I could try to somehow create an opening at the bottom side of the pitch and send somebody through there in the hopes that the slow Orcs on the other side of the pitch won't be able to catch him.

Another variant would be to somehow push the lineman forward who has already been pushed closer to the end zone.

A third variant would be to create some sort of opening on upper side of the pitch and blitz through there. With the problem of many Orcs being really close.

The final option would be to retreat back and to reposition. With the disadvantage that all the space I have gained would be essentially lost.

Let's spin through the scenarios:

### aa) Bottom Side Escape



What's happening here is that the lineman next to one of the Blitzers is first removed. The Blitzer is free now. He receives the ball via hand-off and then proceeds to do a 1-d blitz, allowing him to create a free path and enter into scoring range. If you count the squares, you'll notice that he is basically still in range of all the Orcs near him and even some further away. And it shouldn't be too hard for some of them to get free. Therefore this play wouldn't be enough, there would need to be additional reinforcements to cover him. Unfortunately there is almost no one left. Let's have a look:



If things have worked this far, they are likely to go wrong at some point. But the problem isn't as this picture shows that the Lineman failed his GFI there but that even if he had created cover there it would have been of limited use at best because the further out Orc Blitzers and the closer ones as well would be still able to move around him and are in blitzing range. Now, the other only free player left would be the Loner next to the BOB. Of course it is possible to use the loner without RR back up and create some sense of security on that side. But even assuming the dodge away from the

BOB works, there will be now a BOB in 2 GFI range from the upper side.

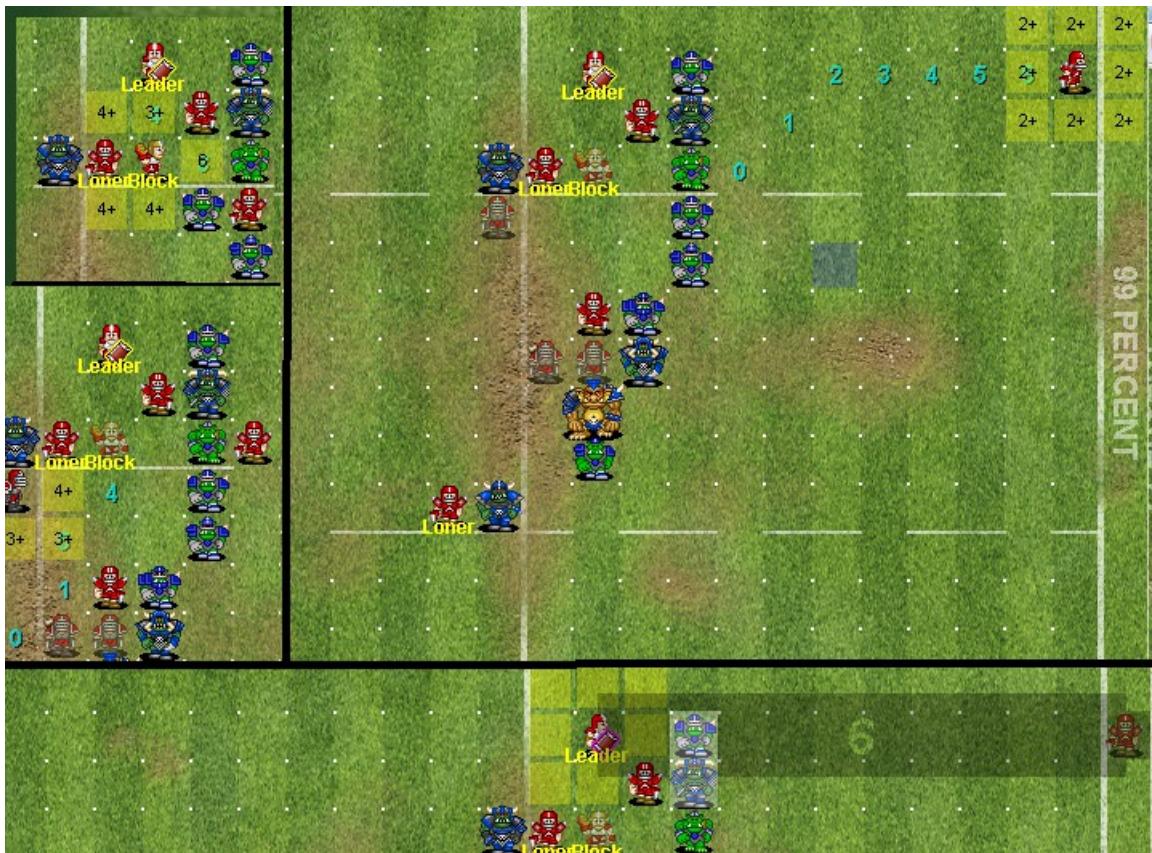
Conclusion: The rolls to make this play happen are way to hard and if they do work it is still a terrible position. There is no winning in playing this variant here. It's a play-to-lose strategy in this case.

Let's better look at another variant to resolve this.

### **bb) Exploit the mistake**

Let's go back to the first picture in this turn.

It is almost too compelling to turn the opportunity down to somehow chain-push that lineman in scoring range and chuck the ball off to him. A direct hand off is not really gonna work since he is in 3 tackle-zones and a catcher is in the path to do the Hand-Off. So the options are to either push him first or to pass the ball to him when he is in the end-zone.



In this example you see first the Catcher get up and place an assist on the Blitzer next to the Human Lineman. Similar to the first scenario a Blitzer is then blocked free at the bottom side of the pitch. The Blitzer again blitzes but this time the Blitzer of the Orcs that has been set up for that purpose. Afterwards he retreats next to the BOB to create a ST4 v ST4 situation there and because he isn't of much use otherwise. The blitz turns out to be a push-back. This makes things more difficult since otherwise it would have been possible to only push him into one tackle-zone and all him to receive the ball on a 4+. From there on out only an intereception would have to fail, a pass to work, a 3+ dodge and 2 GFI. Those are not good odds and if they were the only thing to consider that would be maybe a half playable variant if you don't think you are going to win. But the blitz is what really kills it: You just can't expect a blitz to work the way you want.

In this case it is a push pack. So the variant to go with a push-back is as we planned to go to the end zone, then make a pass. Look at the picture, look at the success-chance. It's pretty self-explanatory. There is a 6+ interception involved that is rolled prior to the moment where the pass is made and if the ball goes somehow off course or lost in the middle it will be ridiculously easy for the Orcs to pick it up. Just look at it. As much as you may want to exploit your opponents mistakes, this just isn't a good play. Forget it, don't even try.

Usually these plays are done because of a feeling of tiredness and a desire to bring things to a conclusion. Don't do it, be strong, it's not a conclusion, it's suicide.

### **cc) Breaking through at the side**



The side has been pretty much blocked off. There is still a number of plays that can be done here. All involve to somehow blitz the Orc Blitzer to the side. Since he has block, there is an increased risk involved but since none of the Human players near him has Block either way, it won't make too much of a difference. The st2 catcher has Block but as mentioned, if the Both-Down result comes and he is unable to get him out of the path, the blitz will be wasted and will look bad. So:

In this variant I go straight for the blitz with the passer. If it wasn't a pow I'd probably have to use a GFI to get a greater distance here.

It is a play that is certainly not without risk from beginning to end but it doesn't have completely terrible odds and if it succeeds there is actually an improvement in position achieved. Ideally you'd have to reinforce with a third player here because further down there will be also still a Blitzer in 2 GFI range and a 50% shot to knock the carrier down.

In this example the carrier could choose to stand at the side to begin with but that would be an insubmountably risky play if going wrong when there is a failed Dodge or GFI on one of the two support players and beyond that I have to account for Orc dodges that could cut their way short and even reach me on that last square and push me out.

Since I'm risk averse and there are still some turns left in the half I go for a retreat and don't bother with making any of those plays at all.

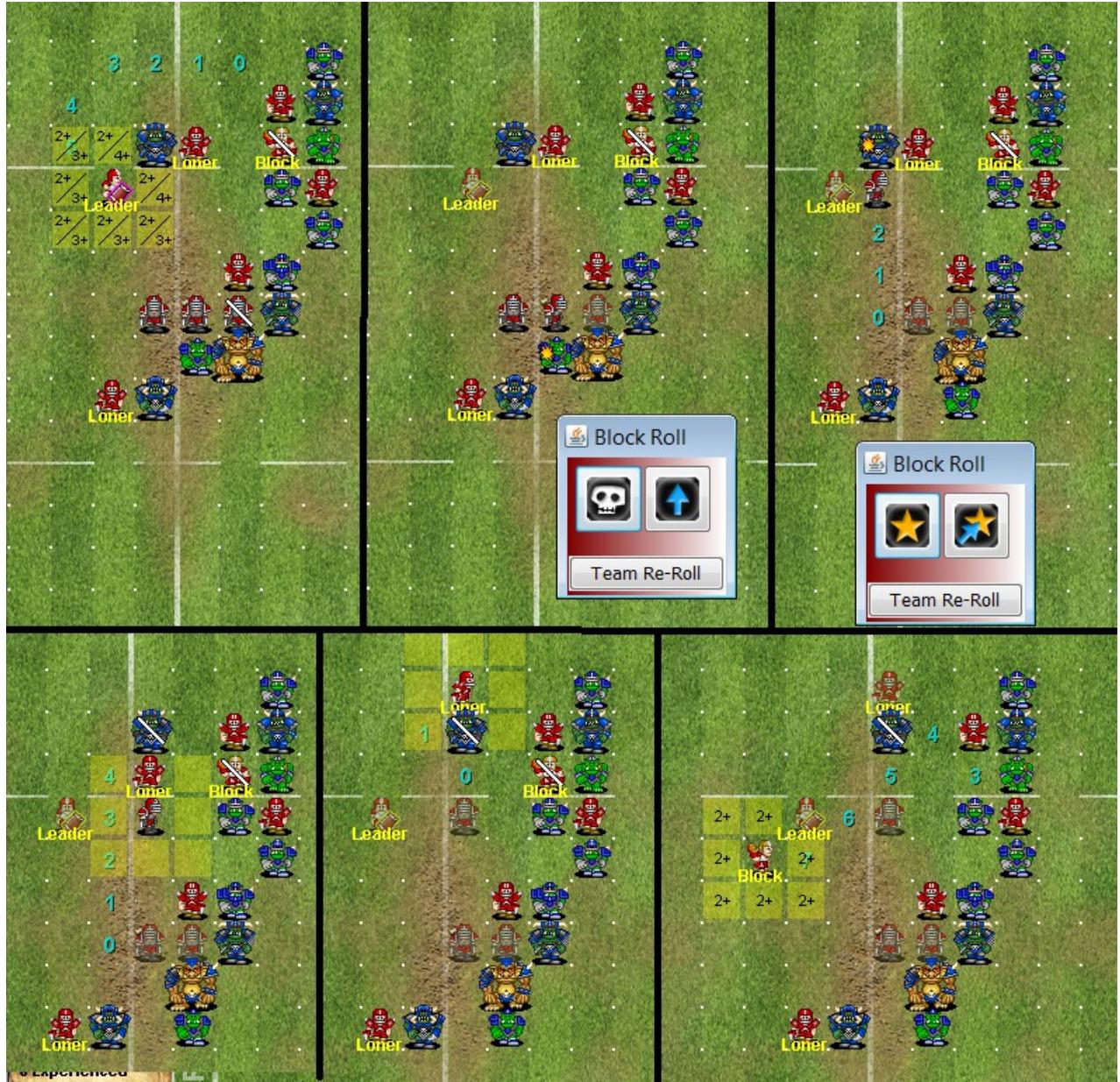
### **dd) Enough time not to scramble**

Note that this isn't an obvious choice. Not in this case anyways. To back down here is a huge encouragement to the Orcs to keep doing what they do. The problem is: It is a good strategy and I don't want to encourage my opponent to play me well.

But I have to somehow pick my fights when they make sense to be picked and this one just doesn't make sense. But aside from covering my carrier it is much more important now that I get a player in range to score as a diversion for the remaining Orcs. The clock is starting to close in on me, on both of us as a matter of fact.

That I am a player down doesn't exactly help. If you have been counting, you'll know that we are in turn 4 and that is a good time to have at least made it to the line of scrimmage with the cage if you

want to score by turn 8. Anyways, turn 5 is still good. Let's retreat.



Note that the last move with the Catcher I'm making here is a bit controversial. The Catcher is the last remaining player I have a decent chance to reliably dodge with. He isn't really reliable but since I'm rather secure it's OK. Anyways, I do not use him here to give me full cover because from this angle there are just so many players of my team next to the opponent that he will have a hard time getting to my carrier. And I really want to keep my Catcher out of harms way because I might have to hand-off soon to him and change the game mode a bit up.

## k) Slaughterfest

Obviously things can't go well forever. The last dodge finally fails and the Orcs turn starts.



This will be the Orcs chance to finish the humans off and make them pay for not going down easily.



The Orcs are switching around a bit here with the order of actions executing blocks first and moving then. This is actually often not a bad idea in cases like this. The blocks are performed with Block, a Re-Roll is still available, the risk is rather low and you have to sort of know how the blocks will turn out to be able to make the most out of the move actions.



To already go here for the Big Guy block is debatable since the lower flank still hasn't been fully secured and there might be a potential escape route opening for the Humans if the troll fails. But with a 3-d block it's reasonably secure. The Orcs obviously have to risk much less than the Humans on average to stay ahead of the game.



## I) Time to End the Stalling

So far in this game I have been in reasonable trouble. I can't win a game if I have to keep rolling dice turn by turn. Something is bound to go wrong. Unfortunately I still don't have a choice to stop. I have to keep rolling or I'm done. But the Catcher I placed in safety has paid off. I can risk a hand-off now and it certainly isn't a bigger deal than dodging out.

But first I need to make a plan.



The obvious play is really the hand off to the Catcher here. The question is a bit where to go from there. With only 3 turns left I can't really fall back any further. On the other hand, once the Catcher has the ball, the Orcs won't be able to blitz him so easily. Blodge will secure the ball rather well. So the Catcher could dodge around the Orc Passer and halt on the upper end, then be secured by 2 more players I'd need to dodge with. Thats a huge risk.

The alternative is to somehow blitz the Loner next to the BOB free and use the opening that will be created there.

Now, I could use my Catcher to do that directly with a -2d block. And a lot speaks for doing that. The risk is not too high since he happens to have Block and it's better than risking yet another dodge with somebody.

The problem is that if something goes bad with the Carrier, I'll be screwed. So I'll just do the hand-off, then use a Blitzer to perform a 1d block. If it fails the Catcher still has the ball and it won't be that easy to knock him down. As a precaution I'll also stand up with some of the players, although I might lose them in the process. But if I can't win my offense I'm screwed either way.



Once the BOB is out of the way, I decide not to take any more risks than I have to and refrain from putting my Catcher really in scoring range. At this point I absolutely can't afford to lose the ball the other team and have THEM score either. Time to make things work on non critical actions.

### m) Outplayed



The Orcs continue their bash spread. For them it is getting quite important now that at least their blocks pay off. If you get into a situation like this it is wise to concede to the opponent that he was unlucky. It doesn't matter that the humans had to play their hearts out, the Orc coach won't see it that way. So give him some notes of encouragement and he might be less focused when he does his next turn.

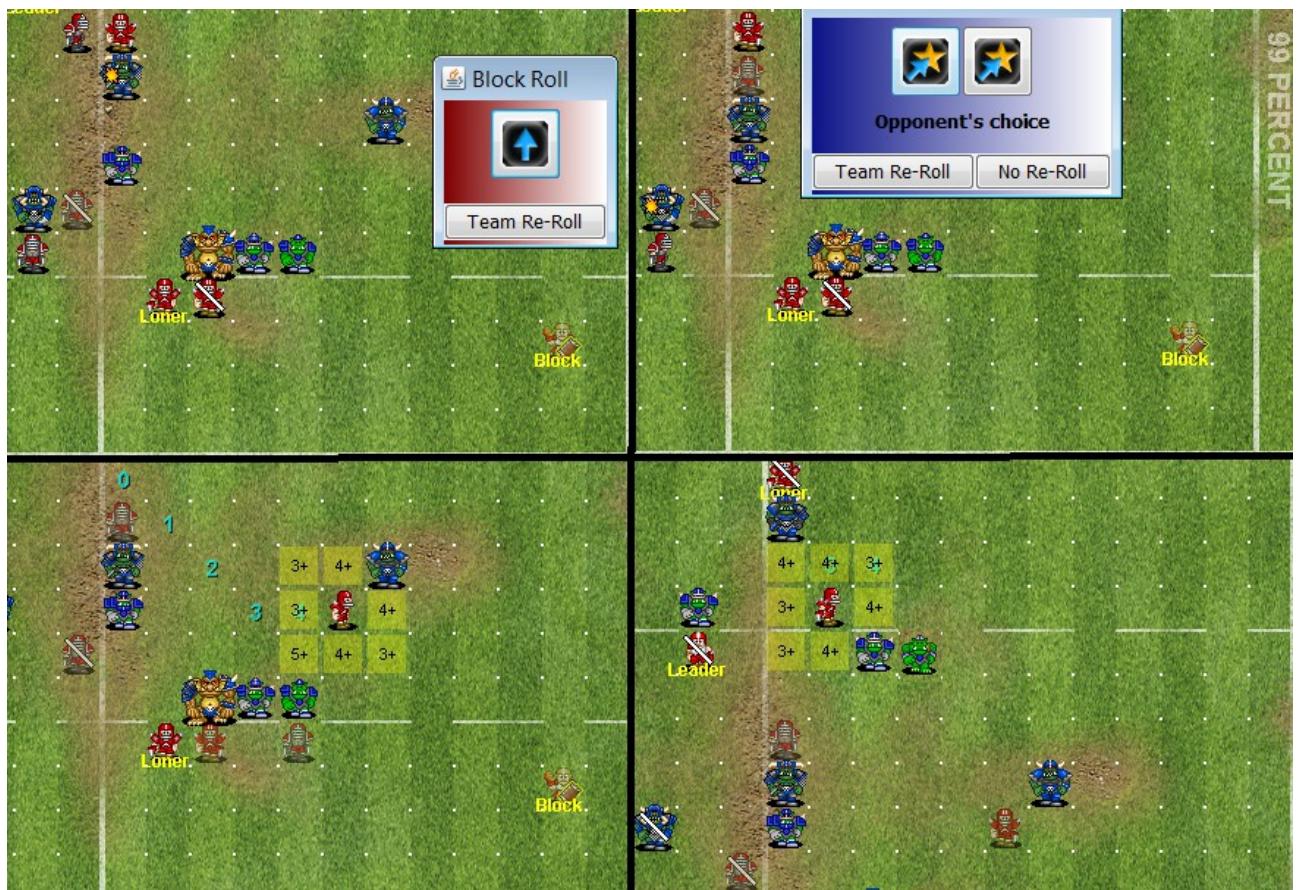


## n) Endgame

At this point the Humans are pretty much through. It all comes down to whether or not their rolls will succeed or not. But even on failure it should be hard for the Orcs to counter score here. So it's decent outcome fore the Humans given the basic layout of the both teams and what they are capable of.



Whether or not to move to the wall here is a tough choice. It would get me out of blitzing range of the BOB but the Orc Blitzer would be still capable to bring me down. It would require for another player on my team to make a good dodge and cover me. That's a risk I don't want to take. At worst I have to take one block here and I'm home free. I decide to go the opposite direction and move away from the wall to not get cornered there after a blitz.



The block here doesn't really pay off but the -2d blitz is still better than a Block so I start here with

that.



o) The final chance



I'll conclude the example here, there is no need to see how things will turn out. At this point further stalling is silly. On top of it stalling wasn't really the plan to begin with. You'll probably find that the game had a lot of pows. In a game of chance you never really know what is going to happen. In this game it has been a lot of pows, in another it will be a lot of skulls. You have to work with what you get when it comes up. Please also notice how these results still have produced very different outcomes. For instance the final block holds a very good outcome. Yet the Orc Lineman is utterly incapable to utilize on it against a Dodger. It's differences like this that decide a game

## V. Special Tactics

The game of Blood Bowl has changed a lot in the recent years. One of the most important changes is the coming into play of the many counter strategies that have appeared in the CRP rules. In its core, the rules are still the same but you will find that these aspects are dominating the game even in early stages of team development. It is common to a point now, where it appears like caging has become obsolete.

The main reasons are:

1. Skill stacking is so much more affordable now that it is easy to run a Leap/Strip Baller.
2. Positioning game against Slann is pointless.
3. Vampires Gaze disassembles cages too easily.
4. Stunties don't only run through cages, they can also OTT.
5. OT-Scorers are a bit weakened, now that they can't get MA11 anymore, but due to NR.1 they are still as real of a threat as ever.
- 6 The. Claw-Mighty Blow-Piling On combo gives a tool to tare through anything to a point where your positioning won't matter anymore.

Don't be fooled by these arguments tho. The ability to stall well is as important as ever. Only the requirements of doing it well are much higher now.

Playing well against these teams equates to knowing how to stall well against these teams.

That does not mean that you should always stall. BB is a game of decision making and your ability to assess and make the right decision in a given situation will define your quality as a coach.

But to get there you have to understand your options first and to be able to make the best use out of a given situation. Your end-goal is to stall but can you reach it?

This will be a step by step analysis of the occurring problems and possible solutions.

### 1. Leap-Strip-Ballers

The most common of this player type you will find on Wood Elf teams. It is available to their Wardancers in a single skill. Since Wood-Elves are much more common than Slann you'll mostly get used to see this player type here.

So I'll address the situation with Wood-Elves first and then move on to Slann under point 2.

#### a) Choosing the right carrier

If you are dealing only with a Strip Baller, the best response is almost always to utilize a Sure Hander. The problem is obviously that once you are in the game, it will be too late for you to get one if you don't have one. But lets assume you could pick a player of your choosing:

Dealing with advanced cage-breaking tactics you should say good-bye to any notion that your ball carrier can't be blocked. He can be blocked. He most likely will be blocked and you are probably going to lose the ball and subsequently the game if that happens against a high agility opponent. Therefore your carrier should have a bundle of attributes: He should have Blodge (Wrestle won't cut it here), he should have Sure Hands and he should have some agility to pick the ball up safely and dodge and potentially even throw the ball off if something bad happens.

Ideally you want at least a st3 player to force the opponent into a 1d block but if you have a st4 player with Blodge, you are pretty save even if the Wardancer gets into your zone.

Assuming you don't have such a player, here is what you have to consider with other types:

A skillless st4/st5 player gives a 50% (18/36) to knock over per dice, giving a 25% (9/36) shot on a -2d block. The probability to roll a skull for the Blitzer (with Block/Wrestle) will be 11/36 in any case. Since this are the odds pre re-roll it makes sense to go after a stronger skillless player, but even more so after an equally strong or weaker player. If you are dealing with a Strip Baller and don't have Sure Hands, his success chance will increase to 25/36 to knock the

ball off. At that point it is really a bad deal.

If you decide whether to use a Blodger or a st4, look at the Leapers particular skills. If he comes with Wrestle/Tackle, there is virtually no point in using a Blodger. Well, you get the picture.

## b) Damage Control

If you have been paying attention to a) you know that your ball will probably get knocked off at some point. Since you can't control that it happens, control how it happens. As has been discussed under defensive strategies, a full body cage will rarely ever work because you consume too many players, give too much surface away to surround them, put them completely out of position and have no control over how they will be pushed.

It is still OK to use the full body cage technique in desperate times, like against leapers, yet you won't always be able to even do it. An almost full body cage is another matter tho. By placing players correctly, you can control the point of entry from where the Leaper strikes. By association you'll be able to control where your carrier is pushed.

## c) Guard

As explained under b) you can control the point of entry. If you have a guarder available you'll want to control that entry point with him. Having a guarder on every entry point makes a weak St3 player much more versatile. This might be your best way of staying in the game.

## d) Scatter

You think you may have no control over the scatter at all because it is too random, but you do. There are only 8 possible squares a ball can bounce to and from there again if squares are occupied. If you count the number of squares where a ball scatter would be beneficial. Out of the 8 squares you can make a decent risk assessment. Be aware that tight formations actually pose a greater risk to you because the ball can scatter multiple squares from its original position. Therefore, loosely standing 2 squares away from the ball carrier is the best option to handle a scatter: They still form a sort of shield wall, the ball will be in tackle-zones and you'll have less problems to pick it up again. Please note that this isn't an exact science. The scatter sure is random enough to be unpredictable at times. Rather invest in not getting blitzed in the first place but don't just stand in the open just because you think the Leaper will get to you anyways. The game doesn't end on the ball loss, but then you are close to done after the pick up.

## e) Fouls

Dealing with Wood-Elves you'll find that their Strip-Baller threats are very real but also very limited. If something were to happen to that woody key player, their team is gonna be screwed in a major way.

You should ask yourself: What does that elf think is going to happen if he jumps on a 3+ into a group of 6 or 7 of your players?

He's asking for it. Give him the boot. If he is stunned, you have neutralized the threat for the next turn, great. You might even have the time to move away from him in the turn after that.

## f) Outplay the enemy

If you can make the Strip Baller end up behind you, you might be able to outrun him. Be aware, they are rather on the fast side.

## g) Hang Back

If you find that you can't circumvent the opponent sacker or are taking unnecessary risk to lose the

ball on offense, don't bother with stalling. Bring the ball carrier out of range. Hang in your backfield, hand-off or pass and score as explained in the Offense section under Two-Turn-Touchdowns.

Also read up on the hints under point 2.

## 2. Handling Slann

If you want to learn about leaping threats you may want to read the NR. 1 entry too.

This entry will discuss the differences between Elves and Slann.

Slann are decent leapers but they lack Elven agility. This gives different options to protect from them. On the other hand ALL the Slann can leap. That means taking a single threat out won't do much good, although there still might be the one or other player worthwhile fouling, I won't advise it. Don't mess your position up too much. You'll need it.

Slann are currently my favorite race. They are not considered a threat yet but I assure you, they are. To beat a well coached Slann team is a real piece of work.

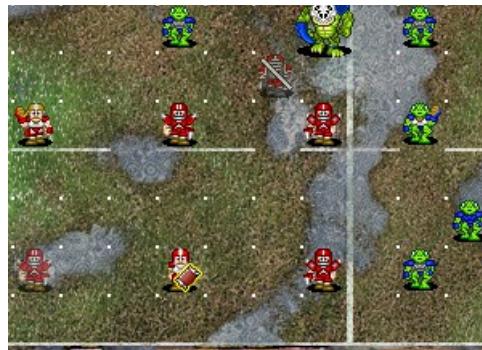
### a) Large-Cluster-Cages



A Large-Cluster-Cage is build around the idea to bring in 2 squares distance a player wall between the carrier and his teammates. And that from all angles that can be leaped from. The goal is that it will be less efficient to leap near the carrier because the attacking sacker will have to do an additional dodge in a tackle-zone to get to him. Please note that this strategy is less effective against High-Agility-Players, who won't mind that dodge.

The quality of the Large-Cluster-Cage is that it utilizes a decent defense on a minimum of involved players.

## b) Large-Cluster-At-The-Wall-Cage



A way to save even more players is to build a large cluster at a wall. Note that you can be cornered and won't be able to hold your position forever. Still a good method to hold your fort for another turn and make something happen.

## c) Difficult Terrain



Difficult Terrain is an advanced version of a large cluster wall. Essentially you spike the whole area with lots of you players standing in a very wide formation and making it very difficult to penetrate.

## d) Focus On The Catchers

Similar to Skaven, the Slanns absolute key-players are their ag4 units. Unsimilarly they come with less armor than the rest of the team. Needless to say that they are good targets for any sort of attack. They are st2 so likely they won't be the ones going for your ball.

Since they will often come with Blodge, you might want to refrain from attacking them with unsuited player types. Don't focus on them too much, they won't break the game. Play focused, be aware and take them out on first opportunity.

Once all catchers are gone, you have as good as won. Your opponents ability to sack the ball will mean nothing if he doesn't have a catcher to pick it up afterwards.

## e) Avoid Key-players

The more versatile sackers on a Slann team won't be as mobile as their Wardancer counterparts. This makes it easier to outrun them. Keep a close eye on them and try to stay out of range of the most dangerous ones. Just take a hit from a lesser threat. If your opponent doesn't blitz your carrier at all that is also fine.

## f) Just Score

You'll never truly be save against Slann. So unless the game totally goes your way, you might as well just do it. Better scoring early than losing the ball after all.

## g) Double Wall



Instead of making the ball-handler part of a double screen you can also just relatively safely place him behind it as long as you can make sure that nobody can circle around it.

## 3. Hypnotic Gaze

Vampires aren't known to be the best race in the game. But yet, if you underestimate them you'll find yourself on the losing end more often than not. Against Vampires you need a tight formation. Players shouldn't be too far apart and ideally you run two lines of defense.

To get anywhere the vampire needs to succeed with his gaze roll at first. If you then have a second line of defense, he'll have a lot of trouble even getting a second Vampire in range to create a hole. As a rule of thumb you have to look for any player whose removal via Hypnotic Gaze would ruin your stall. Then fortify the hole with another player nearby. Take it seriously, don't mess up and you'll be fine. See *Double Wall* with the Slann defense. In comparison you probably need to set up a little tighter, tho.

## 4. Stunties

### a) Sides

Stunties may not appear dangerous to you but they can be. Rather than blitzing you head on, they often try to create some sort of crowd that can get especially dangerous for you when you use the sides. Don't let them push you out directly on a -2d or via chain-push.

### b) The Star-Player

Occasionally you'll find a specialized Sstunty that can actually get anywhere and has superior sacking skills. It's usually not a big deal because stunty teams do not have support players to utilize on a brought down carrier. Just follow the suggestions regarding leapers (NR. 1 b, c, d).

Also target him intently and foul him if you have the chance. You should be fine.

### c) War

While in general you want to avoid your opponent, it doesn't hurt to tag Stunties, ideally in crowds.

### d) Skinks

Some faster Stunties like Skinks can dodge through screens and attack you from behind. Make sure that you have all sides of your player covered so that assists aren't possible. Be careful with screens, rely on cages if in doubt, use st3 carriers rather than st2 and take some time to count the Skinks range.

### e) Strength

Use a stronger carrier. As long as you are stronger than the sacker you are dealing with you should be fine.

## 5. OT-Scoring

The big issue with OT-Scoring is that it messes up a stalled half. If your opponent can just score back you just wasted your time and now have less time to win the game.

Before you decide what to do, you need to assess first how big of a threat the scorer actually is. A ma10 sprinter you can consider to be a very serious threat.

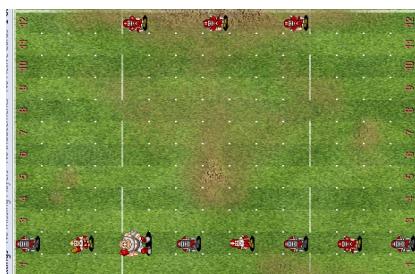
### a) Take The Ma10 Out

The only way to be really fine is if you can somehow get the ma10. Whether he is in or out will likely decide the game, so taking him out by any means should have a really high priority. It is even worthwhile giving up position to some degree just to get to him. Obviously your opponent will do his hardest to protect him if he is a little smart. So prepare to not be able to take him out.

### b) Score Faster

If you see that you can't take the key player out, you'll want to score just faster. Give your opponent time to score back, then to score back yourself. You put the game a bit in the hands of Nuffle like that. Or rather: You give your opponent game control. But you won't get anywhere unless you take some risks here. If you want to decide the game, speed things up and maybe there will be another shot on the key player.

### c) Proper Turn 8 Setup



Not much can be done in turn 8. Usually it's best to just go with the common turn 8 setup with the line close to the end zone. Be careful not to leave spots that require less than 2 tackle-zones to dodge through. The sides are very vulnerable like that. You need 11 players for that, so if you are down to 10, you may want to put players in those spots who are specialized in taking prey down (Diving Tackle, Prehensile Tail, Tackle vs Dodgers).

### d) Untrue One Turn Scoring

For faster teams it has been an established tactic to create a 'false' way of One-Turn-Scoring by

executing multiple chain-pushes.

This book will not discuss it because it has been extensively covered on fumbbl.com<sup>1</sup>.

## **6. Handling Claw-Mighty Blow-Piling On**

This topic has been discussed through quite some length. It is deserving enough of its own chapter. Not the least because it is so controversial it will be only discussed here as a special tactic subsection.

Claw-Mighty Blow-Piling On is commonly referred to as CPOMB. It is a threat because a successful blitz or block has chance of 58.47 % to remove an opponent from the pitch. Other aspects of the game, like position will pale in comparison. Since it's earliest appearance counter strategies have been proposed.

### **a) Fend**

#### **aa) Spamming**

The first suggestion was the spamming of Fend. Fend has an indirect effect on Piling On because it can only be used on a follow up. This strategy has several disadvantages: It is a skill choice in reaction to a threat. The coach who owns the player with Piling On usually gets to choose who his next blitz target will be. Therefore, if you have to invest such an amount of TV to counteract a single skill, it's usually not worthwhile. Spamming Fend therefore should only be done for its value beyond counteracting Piling On. The value beyond is however quite limited (still popular amongst some). Details will be addressed in the *Skill Discussion* part.

#### **bb) High-Value-Protection**

Fend as protection for a valuable player tends to be a good choice. It competes here with other protective skills like Dodge and +Av, both of which have limited availability and each can be made arguments for. Piling On protection of Fend can be counteracted by Juggernaut on blitzes and with Grab on blocks. A CPOMBer however is more likely to take Tackle than either those two skills: The biggest concern of the CPOMBer is to roll a pow and to get a player down in the first place. For the same reason however, Dodge may be a better choice than Fend. +AV probably isn't: You'll choose Fend on a high value player out of concern he might be specifically targeted by the CPOMBer. If he gets to you, AV will never help. Apart from Claw there are however strong arguments to take +AV. If for no other reason then turn +AV down because it's depleting TV with additional +10 TV.

### **b) Frankenstein-Tactics**

Frankenstein became famous for establishing an anti-CPOMB-tactic based on complete surrender. During his opponents offense he'd hide his whole team in a corner of the pitch and use less valuable players to create an unpenetrable shield wall, let the more valuable players be subject to chain-pushes into the crowd and allow them to disappear off the pitch. The prevented carnage could help him to play his own offense and get out of the game alive. He was eventually banned for excessive use of that technique in one of the most controversially discussed decisions of the FUMBBL administration.

Mild versions of this tactic still hold some validity. You win your game on offense after all. Staying on the ground when on the ground has been a long established tactic. It should be said that you have

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fumbbl.com/help:OTT> ; last checked: Mai, 1st, 2014.

no real way of entirely preventing being targeted. The pitch isn't large enough and there is no real space to hide. By acting defensively in a too obvious way you're usually giving your opponent a reason to press even harder on you and fear you less.

### c) The 5-Player Rule

The establishing of the 5 player rule was probably one of the most revolutionary changes between LRB4 and CRP. It states that only 5 skilled valuable players should be fielded on the pitch on defense at a time. The other six players would be 3 replaceable players on the line and another 3 players to cover the remaining 5. The strategy was to create a constant shield wall throughout the half in which the 5 valuable players never could be injured.

The general idea of the tactic is very good. It should be mentioned that it doesn't prevent carnage and merely re-distributes it. Skilled players are less likely to get injured because they have more protective skills, yet they also contribute more to your TV. If your rookie players get targeted, you'll mostly lose their monetary value in TV while with skilled players you'll lose less monetary value (less likely to be injured) but more TV value in skills.

Therefore, if you are generally short on money, this tactic will only get you so and so far. CRP rules still accommodate it well because it is easy to get money and there exists an infinite supply of journeymen.

The other problem with that tactic is that at some point you'll have to expose your more valuable players to make an attempt to get to the ball. In not doing so you'd play into the hands of your opponents stalling game. Finding the right balance here and following general strategy to slowly increase pressure can be a way of winning here. Since every situation is different however, a generalization is hard to make. For this also check the *5-Player-Rule Setup*.

### d) Fouling

Fouling is now common as established strategy to handle single CPOMBers. The initial fear and still present fear of CPOMB rooted not the least from the crippling fouling rules of the CRP and the resentment of coaches to not use it any longer. A highly efficient mechanic had been turned into a medium risk-medium reward trade off. If you foul in CRP you should be content with getting a stun. You are no longer so depended on having Dirty Player. However, stunning a CPOMBer and making him unavailable for the next turn is rarely a bad move because he has his 58% multiplied with block-success-chance to get a player out on his own when he blitzes.

In addition to that it requires some skill ups to create a CPOMBer. Instilling some fear into your opponent will help your own key players not to be subject of too risky and too exposed moves of the CPOMBer. Fouling finds its limits against teams where CPOMB has been mass-spammed.

### e) Tagging CPOMBers

The most common variant of tagging CPOMB is by using a Fender but really any low value player to take him out of the occasion can be used. In theory a Blodger is an option but you should ask yourself if you consider the lower risk to be injured a good trade off if you do actually get injured. Herein also lies somewhat the dilemma with the low value Fender: He may be expendable but he only is expendable because he picked a poor skill in the first place. Then he is still subject to Claw and Mighty Blow to take him out. It's generally not recommendable to tag CPOMBers unless your opponent has *just one*. If he has 2, he'll just get to use both in the same turn. You'll not be able to take that kind of carnage over the course of a half and still win very often or survive very long.

### f) Playing Normal

A good advice is probably not to panic. If you play your game, avoid direct contact with the

CPOMB, give them the proper respect while otherwise going through your turns with your general strategy will get you very far. If you manage to capture the ball from your opponent and generally put the game at some unrest, strategical opponents will be easily swayed to focus on moves to re-retrieve the ball rather than using their carnage specialists. Carnage oriented opponents might ignore the situation and continue to injure you with little regard to a risk of a 0:3 loss but since this book teaches to play strategical and not like a sissy, winning is usually a good enough goal to attain.

## VI. Skill Discussion

### 1. General Considerations

To large parts the meta game of CRP BB is defined by its balance between Team Value and skill choice. Although this has been the case previously in the form of inaccurately representing a teams capabilities in form of Team Rate, Team Value is much more transparent and grows quickly in effect once it reaches the 100 TV difference threshold (minimum price for most inducements). Any 10 TV differences from there on out can decide a game. Inducements although expensive are incredibly versatile and can allow a team to address specific threats of an opposing team much better. Some teams, like Halflings and Goblins are even depended on Inducements to some degree.

Therefore, inducement value represents in an absolute way the limit of how much a team can handle to be misdesigned since inducements take no effort to acquire.

Thankfully a customized team will still be superior most of the time and is offered at a cheaper rate and most importantly without "Loner".

There is an unaddressable flaw in the design of measuring systems like TV that stems from the two aspects of the game that define success in a game from a development side: The health and survivability of a player and the players skill to do something on the pitch. A player with a great set of skills will be able to do magnificent things but the more fragile he is the less time he will spend on average on the pitch. That means a skill that allows a player to do great plays is worth less on a more fragile player type because he has less play time. In its extreme Stunties are an example of player types that get overpriced quickly, Chaos Warriors represent a player type that only grows in value as it gains skills. Skill access of course has a huge impact, but the main impact stems from what the skills of the certain categories actually do. Few skills (like Thick Skull) purely increase the survivability on the pitch. Most allow to get a higher success chance with certain actions. When these actions become more relevant for survival, the skill has a double function: It keeps the player alive and makes him more successful on the pitch. Those skills are the most valuable type of skills.

Here is what you have to consider when choosing skills:

### 2. Skill Tiers

#### a) Tier 1 + (Block)

Block is a bit the crown jewel of skills. Any player development starts around the question whether or not to take it. Together with Dodge it is one of the two skills that reduce the chance to get knocked down on a Block. Blocks superiority stems from the fact that Dodge is counterable via Tackle. Block can be overwritten with Wrestle but since a successful Wrestle won't hurt you and will put the Wrestler in the same position as you, Wrestle isn't superior.

#### b) Tier 1 (Dodge, MB, Guard)

Traditional tier 1 skills besides Block are Dodge, Mighty Blow and Guard. A bunch of other skills falls under this category but these three are shown here separated because they all qualify for a first skill pick (along with Wrestle) and even stand out amongst the tier 1 skills.

The noticeable thing about that is that 2 strength skills (MB, Guard) fall in this category and only one agility skill (Dodge), making strength access more important in the game of BB.

##### aa) Dodge

Protection wise is Dodge a purely defensive skill. Given opportunity you'll want it for that purpose

on any player. Taking it before block makes really only sense on player types that can profit from the early improvement in the ability to dodge as second effect, making it an excellent first skill pick for ag4 players. Never completely neglect Block tho, because you'll need it in blocking wars.

#### bb) Guard

The relevance of Guard could fill an entire chapter. It's a skill that helps offensively and defensively in any crowd and is usually a great help on sacking the ball from an exposed carrier. If you don't have it, you'll often have no chance but to resort to 1-dice-blocks or even make -2d-blocks. Due to their effect on other players, Guard players are usually the first to be blocked in a crowd, therefore also the first to die. Therefore the best subject to this skill is a strong player type, that is hard to move and hard to kill. Therefore it combos with protective Skills like Block and Dodge and works extremely well with Stand Firm or Side Step. A team consisting of Guards is an unpenetrable force that can only be dealt with by isolating players and taking them out.

#### cc) Mighty Blow

Although the brokenness of bash skills usually revolves around the question whether Claw or Piling on is the more game breaking skill, Mighty Blow is still the ultima ratio in terms of bashyness. Compared to a pure Piling On it is slightly inferior now but the Blitzer doesn't go on the ground. You'll want to have that skill at least once on a dedicated Blitzer.

Choosing it multiple times will deplete it's value because you can't blitz more than once but taking it will never be wasted since even an occasional use and the option to be more versatile with your blitzes makes it more efficient than most other skills in the game.

### c) Tier 1.5 (Tackle, PO, Claw, SS)

This category has all the skills that sum up the remaining great skills in the game. Worth mentioning here is Tackle, Piling On, Claw and Side Step. You'll notice that three of these skills are pure bash skills and that is no coincidence. Taking out opponent players will give you a huge statistical advantage on the game. Ideally you'll want those three to stack with Block and MB on the same player, since you won't be getting more than one blitz per turn anyways and it will be nice to have it all in one fist.

#### aa) Tackle

That Tackle is on this list says more about the relevance of Dodge than it says of Tackle. You'll find that games are extremely hard without it because your opponent can simply choose a Blodger as carrier and you'll often end up rolling 6 or 8 dice against him without being able to knock him down. So besides it's functionality at causing carnage it's just a critical skill to access the carrier. If you have to choose to blitz a Dodge-carrier with a Tackle player or a MB-Claw-PO player, you'll probably want to go with the Tackle player most of the time, because you simply can't afford for the blitz to fail. This is also why you'd want to stack those skills.

#### bb) Claw

This skill is a bit situational. Don't bother using it unless it actually helps. If you have access to it you'll want to maybe get a second player with MB, PO after a first player with MB Claw. In relation of those two skills you'll want claw still first at least in a random environment because av8 and av9 players are just very common and very often very much in the way. Claw therefore allows you to be more precise in picking a blitzing target. But don't hesitate to rather go for a target with softer armor if its skills are more dangerous to you. Also since Claws doesn't put you down you can retreat to safety after a blitz.

#### cc) Piling On

The revolution of CRP. This skill makes all the difference but its effect is greatest if the stage is set with the other mentioned skills. If you want to learn more about how to use and deal with CPOMB read the part in the *special tactics* section.

#### dd) Side Step

Side Step as well as Stand Firm are great skills post Dodge and Block. It makes little sense to take them over it, because they mainly or rather most commonly affect the aftermath of a block and if you go down it's much less important where you are. Although both skills have their advantages and disadvantages Stand Firm didn't make it on the Tier 1.5 list here simply because of its position in the strength skill category amongst other very good skills. Next to the CPOMB combo Blodge, Side Step represents the other great combo path in the game. Skills like Guard and Diving Tackle round it up. Stand Firm is the alternative to SS in that combo. SS generally allows to pick up to a maximum of 7 different squares to move to while Stand Firm only offers to remain on the same square or let the opponent choose one of three different squares.

Absent of better choices, spamming Blodge, SS is very well worth it.

### d) Tier 2 (Wrestle, SF, SB, DT, Leader, SH, DP)

Tier 2 skills are Wrestle, Stand Firm, Strip Ball, Diving Tackle, Leader, Sure Hands and Dirty Player.

#### aa) Wrestle

This skill is often perceived as the perfect sacking skill together with Tackle. Although the two make a great sacking combo, it makes little sense to take Wrestle and Block together because both affect the same symbol and by just taking one of them, the big issue, being subject to a turnover will be resolved. Block on the other hand is more valuable for any player type who might have to carry the ball themselves at some point (ag3+). Then Block is an actual carnage producing skill while Wrestle is not.

Wrestles real value besides that lies in its double function as an alternative to both Block and Tackle as a first skill pick. It is not as good as either of those skills and a player with Block and Tackle would be simply superior to one with only Wrestle, but the fact that you can sack the ball now on 1/3 per dice from a Blodger instead of 1/6 makes it a huge asset skill to have on a player if you don't have the time to skill up a proper Tackler. Especially if you start a team without skills, this can be an early pick for you.

#### bb) Stand Firm

Stand Firm probably accommodates Guard a bit better than Sidestep does because you are usually in a position in a crowd where you only have tight space to maneuver. Another advantage of Stand Firm over Sidestep is that it is impossible to crowd-push a Stand Firmer while a Side Stepper can be still crowd-pushed when all squares around him are occupied. Exception is of course Juggernaut. Watch out for it. It's usually not there tho.

#### cc) Strip Ball

This could be a Tier 1 skill if it wasn't for Sure Hands. Sure Hands is quite common not the least because a lot of teams even start with players who have it. Although people often recommend unifying it with Tackle, there is no real reason to. It may improve the sacker qualities but it does so interfering with each others functionality. Having a Tackler separate from a Strip Baller is therefore more viable. Wrestle combos with either of those skills.

#### dd) Diving Tackle

An unskilled player with Diving Tackle is of very situational use. Efficiently you can stop a player

from simply dodging away and blitzing somebody else for the turn but it will be incredibly easy to just block the DTler off or blitz him and then move away.

His real strength is revealed in combination with Blodge and Sidestep. You efficiently can't Dodge from such a player type and can't get him down or away either. He will be incredibly resilient and the incarnation of a nightmare, accessible only with general and agility skills.

#### ee) Leader

This is your typical pick-only-once skill and the only skill worth mentioning from the passing category. Its value is obvious since its much cheaper to get a skill than a Re-Roll. It is not quite as good as a Re-Roll because the player who owns it can be removed. Therefore you should cover him at the beginning of the half to not mess up your re-roll count. There is no real reason to turn the skill down. If you can access it, take it as soon as possible. If you only can take it on a double, it may not be worth it taking it over a tier 1 or 1.5 skill. Your call.

#### dd) Sure Hands

Not failing the pick up is of invaluable importance and this skill is just what you need to make it happen. But make no mistake: An ag3 pick up with Sure Hands is usually not worth the risk over using an ag4 player who has still access to a team re-roll. On top of it ag3 players are rather sluggish to move when they end up in tackle-zones, so try to rather put the skill on a high agility player and use low agility passers rather for situations where you deal with opposing Strip Ballers. In the end the second factor is the factor why you should build up a Sure Hander eventually. Note that Sure Hands are secondary to Block and Dodge here because it won't help you that you can hold on to the ball on a push back if you go down.

#### ee) Dirty Player

This skill has fallen a bit from straight Tier 1. It's still a useful asset but you have to ask yourself if you aren't better off saving 20 TV and just to foul without it. Since fouling is still an important part of the game having a single foul can not only make a good bit of a difference but also instill fear in your opponent and potential CPOMBers. There isn't much point in spamming it anymore.

### e) Tier 2.5 (TH, BT, Leap, D-O, Kick)

Somewhat deserving of an own skill category are these powerful skills that are heavily limited in use based on situation. To mention here are Two Heads, Break Tackle, Leap, Dump-Off and Kick.

#### aa) Two Heads

The mutation skill category is a bit hard to evaluate because the races that have access to it usually have access to the better strength skill category. You usually just want to take Claws from here and be done with it. Two Heads is just such a huge asset in that it makes doges possible for ag3 players and allows more agile players to even walk past player types that its hard to forget about it. With underworld goblins only access to agility and mutation skills, this is a solid first skill pick. Otherwise it is a solid choice for any player that isn't supposed to only focus on carnage.

#### bb) Break Tackle

This skill is obviously very situational. Depending on who takes it it can be the most useless skill in the game. But even if your strength agility difference is just 1, it is often worthwhile taking when the strength is at least 4. However, since it's only useable once per turn and Two Heads has unlimited uses, Two Heads is probably better for those particular cases. The more common situation is to rather to take it on a St4 or 5 player with Agility 2 or 1. An immobile player suddenly becomes mobile. That is especially useful for guarders. A particularly powerful player can gain limited cage breaking abilities like this. When you are about to do a difficult action that involves multiple dodge

rolls with Break Tackle, keep in mind that you can stop executing that action after you had to use up Break Tackle. You don't have to finish something impossible or semi impossible to make the most use of the skill. If you are blitzing, just aim for a supporter instead of your main target. Obviously works great with Dodge.

#### cc) Leap

Although I like Slann, I'm not a huge fan of this skill. Unlike Slann who come with Very Long Legs which is strong contender for the poorest skill in the game, regular players who take this skill will have to do an unmodified agility roll to use it which is harder than a dodge and can't be supported by the Dodge skill. However, the skill has gained significant importance in CRP because players can stack skills now so quickly and easily that it is almost common sense for an Elf-like team to run a Leaper sooner or later, ideally with Strip Ball and Wrestle.

The problem with the skill is that it provides zero protection. It doesn't make a player better at anything he normally does and it just gives him the option to do something else that just might ruin your turn.

That being said you are fairly save if you use it with agility 5. Therefore I'd recommend to wait to get an agility 5 player before taking the skill. Once you have one, the remaining skills should be easy to get since they are general access. The order doesn't really matter and Leap has some value on its own outside of sacking. You can play great offense and get out of impossible situations which is also good for a supporter roll. Since you usually end up next to someone once you have successfully executed a leap you should still have the Dodge skill as well to not get caught up in a bunch of risky rolls. Therefore note that Leap is also clearly inferior to Dodge. Good luck with it.

#### dd) Dump-Off

Dump-Off is interesting because it is key in one of the more powerful combos in this game. Interestingly none of the skills that are part of that combo are tier 1 or 2. This makes Dump-Off somewhat of an untakable stepchild of Blood Bowl and more likely to be seen on players who come naturally with it. It is one of the rare skills where Block and Dodge are counter productive and the skill can hurt the game more than help if used incorrectly. Essentially, the safer your carrier is, the less you want him to use Dump-Off. But your carrier naturally will be skilled save with Block and Dodge otherwise he wouldn't be a good carrier. If he doesn't have Block and Dodge, he is a poor carrier but that doesn't make him good at Dump-Off because any pass is really a high risk action. Doing a pass in the opponents turn while being blitzed just means that you do it without Re-Roll support, in probably multiple tackle-zones and with interception chance. Almost always you might as well hold on to it. So, what do you need to make it save? Nerves of Steel to handle the tackle-zones, Pass to re-roll a failed pass, Save Throw to re-roll an interception, Ag4 or Accurate and finally: Catch on a receiver. Missing any of these components makes the whole thing really very imperfect, since a 2+ roll is usually already too much to risk to lose the ball. However, once you have the full combo, you essentially have a possibility to hold on to the ball indefinitely. This is especially true if you have two of these player types who can dump the ball fourth and back. The most obvious choice from the basic skills for this are obviously Pro-Elves but be aware that this whole thing is not only very costly but also a huge investment without any protection on the players whatsoever and lots of Tier 3 and 4 skills. The fact alone that its possible to run a 2 player offense without a cage and no realistic possibility for the opponent to get to the ball makes it the 2.5 skill within the combo (Ideally you'd of course still run it in a cage and only dump-off if your opponent somehow gets through).

#### ee) Kick

This is a particularly hard to estimate skill. Some people proclaim it is very powerful. I'm struggling to put it into the tier 2 category. You get a certain amount of control over where the ball ends up on

a kick-off. In case of a blitz-event that can be game deciding. Usually you want to kick short, preparing for that and being in range to steal it. In general it can be said that because the situation directly after the Kick-Off is such a chaos, gaining any advantage there is a great help. Late into the half you can choose to kick deep to slow your opponent down scoring. Since you can choose whether or not to use the skill after the kick has been made, you get to de facto choose between two different target destinations, making the difference between a tier 2 and tier 3 skill.

## f) Tier 3 (EA, BigH, SF, JU, Jugs, Grab, Frenzy, Pro)

Tier 3 skills can be still very powerful but they are increasingly situational. Worth mentioning here is Extra Arms, Big Hands, Sure Feet, Jump Up, Juggernaut, Grab, Frenzy and Pro. Tier 3 ranges from somewhat useful skills to skills your TV just isn't wasted on yet.

### aa) Extra Arms

Anything that helps you pick up better can be an asset On ag4+ players Big Hands is probably preferable, otherwise Arms use to also support catches makes it ideal for an ag3 choice. You now can catch and pick up like an ag4. Add Two Heads (ideally first) to it and you have an ag3 player with all the ag4 abilities except for the passing and for the same price (assume it isn't a double). Makes it a decent choice for an ag3 carrier type. Still probably only worth taking after Blodge. Two Heads is slightly preferable to Extra Arms too because once you have the ball in your hands, your main concern will be to get out of nasty tackle-zones. It's a tough choice tho. Sure Hands is somewhat preferable because of Strip Ball but if you feel like that's too many skills on one player you can as well split it up and take Arms here and Sure Hands on another (simpler) player type for those matches you face Strip Ball.

### bb) Big Hands

I have never taken this skill post-CRP but have to acknowledge that it is still very valuable. I hear people talk about it sometimes but haven't seen it being used much either. Its main purpose lies in fishing the ball out of crowds. Makes Leap a great support skill, but since that requires a lot of agility and a really high agility is another way to get the ball from anywhere, I'm rather set just to rely on that agility and to invest my skills in different things. That being said, there is something magnificent and game changing about being able to pick a ball out of six tackle-zones on a 2+. Also works nicely with ag4 and bad weather. Not really worth taking on any player type other than ag4, although some would disagree and say ag5 is fine.

### cc) Sure Feet

This is a skill I like a lot. The pure Re-roll skills are hard to determine in value. You need them more if you run less team Re-Rolls. If you run more, they are more neglectable. If the fact that you have Sure Feet results in you taking more risks, it's a tricky investment. In the end whats appealing to me is that it gives a Re-Roll on something with a very high success chance, meaning that the re-roll chance is also very high. Unlike Pass, Catch or Sure Hands for instance, you get to do the relevant roll more than once during your turn if you want to and if you are not ag4 you may get to walk around a tackle-zone you would have to take otherwise on a 3+. Unnecessary to say it combos great with Sprint and is an obvious choice for anyone who wants to build a 1-turn-scoring.

### dd) Jump Up

A lot of things can be said about this skill but I'll start with this: Any skill that makes you have to lie down first to be used you should think twice about using. Obviously there is some synergy here between Wrestle and Piling On. It has in fact rightly become a very popular choice for Piling On type players on doubles who have to deal with a very shortened operational range every time they go down. The instant block mode is to be taken with some caution. Anything that requires a 2+ roll

to do something will probably let you down sooner than you like. In case of doubt rather go for the blitz, but don't hesitate to exploit a situation where you can penetrate a cage with a jump-up-block. If you have this skill, expect to be fouled. This is the only way to eliminate the threat those player types pose. I don't think this skill is really a good pick for more agility oriented players because they will have plenty of movement in either case. Its real potential lies more in bash support and the players who profit from it usually don't have access to it. Starting with ag2 it loses then in value again. So overall this limited usefulness it what makes it tier 3, aside from being supportive of the most powerful combo in the game.

#### ee) Juggernaut

This is somewhat of a niche skill. It interacts with the same symbol as Block and Wrestle. It overrides both in functionality but it only works on blitzes. This is another skill that can be stacked with a CPOMBer to counteract Fend. As a bonus you get to cause havoc among Wrestlers too since it can negate the skill. That is assuming you also have Block. But then again Block and Jugs aren't that great friends. The skill develops its real potential as a Big Guy alternative to Block which is only accessible on a double. The reason why it is not seeing much use these days in that capacity is because LRB4 pretty much established that Big Guys are poor to use actively. Blitzes are to be done by other player types.

An exception from that rule may be the minotaurs and in general anyone who comes with Wild Animal and Frenzy. The odds to perform a regular blitz with those types is really too low to risk it. But the low Av and the immobility to only be able to walk around on a 4+ give the mino little use for something else. An established technique has been to move the mino around using up a blitz and to refrain from actually attacking someone. Choosing Jugs that will be all less of an issue if you decide to buy a "minoturd" in the first place. In combination with Frenzy it can also be nice to crowd-push Stand Firmers and if you have it, you should definitely make use of it by removing those from strategically important positions.

#### ff) Grab

This could be a great skill if it wasn't part of a such a great skill category with so many other good choices. Its main disadvantage is that its main effect won't work on blitzes. That makes it really hard to control the circumstances under which you can use it. The opponent will always get to either block the Grabber off or to dodge away. An actual purpose in blitzes it has by negating Side Step which can be damn nasty if mass spammed. In the end game having a grabber can be great because he can instigate a 1-turn-chain-push-touch-down without using up a blitz.

#### gg) Frenzy

The skill that gives a free block and the skill that takes you out of position. There is no way to escape. Frenzy grows in value the stronger the player who uses it. Frenzy players can be trapped by preparing multiple assists in a square the Frenzy player is bound to follow up to. This way a Frenzy player can be held in check even when he is in a tackle-zone when his turn starts. Using Frenzy well needs good positional game. Such a player type should avoid crowds and there should be Guards if he gets into one anyways. Dodging abilities are very helpful here to escape out of an unwanted situation after a follow up. Also allows to flexibly move towards a sideline and attempt a crowd-push while being stuck in the middle just a moment before. Frenzy players are more vulnerable due to poor position control, so don't expect them to survive too long. Not a skill worth spamming.

#### hh) Pro

This is obviously a great skill for any Loner. Big Guys probably will get caught up in wanting to take Block over it. On an actual player you won't want to rely on Pro for turnover rolls because its fixed in-build 50% chance does not really accommodate the principle of a likely roll being likely to

re-roll. As a result your chance of success drops significantly. To use a team re-roll to reroll pro can't compensate for that because a 50% chance isn't a high success chance to begin with and you just end up using a team re-roll on lower success odds than you would have had without the Pro. Its real potential however, are non-critical rolls. Worth mentioning here is Bloodlust, any negatrait, Hypnotic Gaze, but most importantly any block that hasn't resulted in a turnover.

This makes it a great alternative to Frenzy for bash oriented players. It still stands somewhat back behind the better choices from the strength skill category. Definitely a skill with niche use too, tho.

#### kk) Hypnotic Gaze

This is obviously a very powerful skill but can't be rated high because it is inaccessible. It's best used with high agility and tackle-zones should be avoided when utilizing it. There is a magic card that provides this skill together with Bone Head. By choosing a Bone Head for that card, its negative side effect can be avoided but its doubtful that this is worth it when the target has a low agility himself.

### **g) Tier 3.5 (Dauntless, Horns, Passing, Stunty, Fend)**

These skills are somewhat helpful but either not game breaking or a bit random. To decide what skills belong in 3.5 and what skills in 4.0 required a bit jumbling around. To mention here is Dauntless, Horns, the passing skills, arguably Stunty and Fend.

#### aa) Dauntless

Not such a wondrous skill like it once used to be, but good enough to give that little +1 St kick sometimes and even more if needs to be. It doesn't combo with Horns anymore, making it only a tier 3.5 skill. Will be probably seen sometimes on dedicated St2 sackers.

#### bb) Horns

This skill got an improvement in CRP. +St on all blitzes makes it quite good. Still it loses out to so many other better skills in the strength section and even in other sections there is too much stuff on par with it to evaluate it better than 3.5.

#### cc) Passing Skills (Accurate, Pass, Safe Throw)

Passing generally suffers from not helping to protect players in any way. The actions require at least two dice rolls and are therefore high risk. You can't afford to lose the ball either and you can compensate for passing by running fast. Then it happens that most fast running teams are the only ones good at passing. There is certainly some merit in skilling up a dedicated passer to a point where he can throw short passes on a 2+. Overall this skill path helps to facilitate a quick 2 turn touchdown. Consolidate the *General Strategy* section to figure out if it makes sense to go that way. It tends to be invaluable for low agility passers, so it gets a 3.5 rating.

#### dd) Stunty (& Right Stuff & Dodge)

This is actually a negatrait. Still it is almost always worth it to have a player on the team just for that skill. It usually also comes with a welcome price dump, free Dodge and Right Stuff. Stunties can get anywhere and they can crowd people on -2d blocks. And if your opponent doesn't give you a chance, at least you limit his options in how he can play the game safely. The positive effect make it here 3.5 in spite of all its negative side effects.

#### ee) Fend

This skill is mighty famous with some people. The answer to Piling On (Unless the opponent has Grab or Juggernaut.) I have heard arguments that players with this skill can't be blocked multiple times but I don't think this is true at all. On occasion an assist might be lost but overall those are not

overwhelmingly strong effects. A Blitzer can virtually follow up after losing a square (assuming there are no other restrictions.) On top of it its usually a good thing when the opponent follows up. You get to hit him back. It definatly pales in comparison to Side Step but gets its considerably high ranking here because it has a protective effect. I can recommend it as alternative to +AV on a valueable player as a very late skill. Then it should be a decent choice as well. See also *Special Tactics: Anti-CPOMB-Tactics*.

## **h) Tier 4**

This category holds the skills that are situational to begin with and should make you feel uncomfortable to have chosen them even if they are part of a combo.

The list here consists of Multiple Block, Shadowing, Thick Skull, Catch, Prehensile Tail, Kick-Off-Return, Strong Arm and Hail-Mary-Pass. Throw-Team-Mate finds its placement only here because it is inaccessible as skill.

### **aa) Multiple Block**

This skill obviously only makes sense on very strong players. Trees are a good example. It helps to have guarders on the team. It can cause severe carnage but is unsuitable to combo with Piling On which makes it a bash skill of somewhat restricted use. On top of it, you'll usually have to do a 2-dice block in situations where you probably could do a 3-dice block otherwise and you'll have to take the double risk of a turn-over. Still on the right player this can produce real trouble.

### **bb) Shadowing**

The General Skill answer to Diving Tackle that only works on fast players. A high agility player can drag such a player several squares behind himself and even make the Shadower end up in a terrible spot. A Shadower can be abused negatively to create openings. The risk is relatively little since he doesn't actually modify the success chance to dodge. If you use up your RR or have low agility you probably shouldn't dodge from this guy. Since he has probably no agility access he won't have good skills to protect himself from blocks or blitzes to get rid of him. If he does, you have a decent chance to escape from him sooner or later if you have decent enough move and agility yourself.

### **cc) Thick Skull**

A purely protective skill. The downside is that your player just stays longer on the pitch to give your opponents more shots to get him in the CAS box.

It's an OK skill tho. Not much can be said. Not really possible to influence its effects.

You probably shouldn't foul these types that much.

### **dd) Catch**

This skill stands in line with Sure Feet, Pass and Dodge. From those four skills it is the least appealing. A catch is a rather rare action in a game where you aren't supposed to pass much and this skill is essentially a warning where you are going to pass to. It is therefore easy to take a catcher out of the game. It tends to be much stronger with Nerves of Steel but since neither of those skills provide any protection it only gets this poor rating. It is sometimes chosen by one turn scorers but it stands to reason to take Sure Feet over it.

### **ee) Prehensile Tail**

The skill you don't want to choose over Diving Tackle. It has no negative side effect but dude, if you get the player down who is dodging from you, why do you care about falling down? If you have no agility access this can annoy your opponent a little. He might dodge anyways and fail. Also combos great with Diving Tackle.

#### ff) Kick-Off-Return

This is actually a decent skill for slow moving carriers. If the ball is in closer proximity it allows a free catch and reduces the pressure in the first turn. Another tough choice to figure out where to place. I hold it in somewhat high regard. But then it is chosen so rarely that it better belongs in this group.

#### gg) Strong Arm

This is just hands down a weaker version of Accurate. It still combos, so if you have Accurate already it's an ok choice. There is little point in picking it first. With Big Guy TTM it has some merit but it is easily the worst skill in the entire strength category section and a contender for a lower tier.

#### ff) Hail-Mary Pass

With Bombers in play, this is the skill you pray to get. It almost belongs in a higher standing just for that but for regular teams in regular situations it is easily one of the worst choices in the game. It is placed in this group just for how terrible it usually is. The scenarios where you can afford to just chuck the ball over the board with no real target are very slim and if you are somewhat in the middle you can pass almost everywhere with Accurate almost just the same and well, potentially more accurate. The same issue is still somewhat true for Bombers. It doesn't really help you if the bomb scatters around uncontrolled in a 3 square proximity. But then it really comes down to whether or not you want to give your opponent an interception chance. There are some arguments to be made that it is a welcome gift if the opponent intercepts a bomb (interception is pre-pass so you avoid the fumble) and then has it detonate in his hand (he chucks the bomb off on +1 and with no RR back up). I'm not entirely convinced this is really so good, but I'll just let it stand.

The combo Hail-Mary-Pass & Diving Catch has inherently no value. The ball can scatter to squares out of range, the distance to ever try that would be only in the end-zone to begin with and there the ball can even get out of bounds more easily, reducing the overall success chance. If you play the pass ideal, success chances will be around 50%, that's really too bad to even try or bother.

Hail-Mary-Pass has great merit on Thro-Ras. They don't have the agility for a proper passing game. Yet even with ma6 and no dodging capabilities they are too slow to always walk the ball. Khemri tend to be pretty lost when they have less than 8 turns to score. HMP is a bit of a salvation in these situations when you can pass to a skeleton far far ahead of you on a 2+ with the passing skill as back up.

#### gg) Diving Catch

There is great hidden potential with this one. But in the end it impacts on a rather unimportant mechanic and you don't even get to re-roll it. It has been improved giving +1 on accurate catches but generally that is rarely relevant, especially on an ag4.

Obviously it doesn't improve protection.

Diving Catch helps on Kick-Off catches. It can be abused to catch a ball from the opposite half if placed on the front-line and the ball lands next to the player. It's not really worth waiting for that but a worthwhile option on Perfect Defense and a lucky ball landing. Obviously that is a 1 in 1000 games situation.

A more common exploit is on a Blitz-Event. Contrary to everyone else you don't have to get into the square where the ball lands but can stand in a square next to it to improve your position. That means you can catch the ball even if you are one square slower. But even if the distance is no problem for you, there is little point to stand in the ball spot. Simply pick the best position for you, then provide cover. The ball then proceeds to scatter from the square you were standing in. Since a kick-off is never accurate that won't effect your roll either.

When in a tackle-zone, or if an ag3 player, you may find that it is probability wise better to pass

than to hand off. However, the benefit is only marginal and you have to watch out for pass impacting skills on the opposing team. For HMP&DC see Hail-Mary-Pass.

## i) Tier 4.5

This category holds skills that have such insignificant effects that there is commonly not even enough reason to take them if they combo well. To mention here is Sneaky Gits, Disturbing Presence, Very Long Legs, Foul Appearance, Pass Block and Always Hungry (Which does about nothing).

### aa) Disturbing Presence and Foul Appearance

Disturbing Presence and Foul Appearance are split skills, they were ok as one skill and one effect for its price but not overpowered. 40 k to have both effects of 20 k for either is simply not worth it.

### bb) Sneaky Gits

It theoretically combos with Dirty Player but this skill really makes you want fouls not to work. This skill's true value is that it doesn't make you rely on assists. A regular foul presents usually about the same uncertainty for whether it succeeds or not. Although an unsuccessful foul has always a lower ban chance, it stands in accordance with the risk. With Sneaky Gits you have the certainty that if you don't succeed, your player will be fine as well. So it stands to reason to use such a player type to foul more frequent and without support. Overall it is probably not worth the investment of 20 TV on a player dedicated for fouling.

### cc) Pass Block

This is still a skill that gets chosen sometimes. It can somewhat seriously mess up a pass especially if you don't see it coming but that is really all there is to it. The thing it mainly has going for it is that nobody uses it. If you see it, it is not so hard to work around.

### cc) Very Long Legs

In my opinion easily the worst skill in the game. It improves interceptions but that is something that will maybe be of relevance in 1 in 25 games. It combos with Pass Block... great. It improves leaps but they can be only done with a skill you will commonly have no use for if you have access to the mutation skill category. Even for Underworld it's useless because their Stunties already get everywhere without leap. On top of it +ag is just plain better in every respect. As a default skill for Slann it finds its maximum potential. Not ever worth taking and I haven't ever seen it taken on any team.

## k) Tier 5

This concludes with the negtraits: Wild Animal, Bone Head, Really Stupid, Blood Lust and Take Root.

## I) When to choose Stat Ups

### aa) Movement or Armor

As a rule of thumb you almost always can use more movement. An exception is probably ma4 to ma5. Since that isn't really fast enough to score in two turns and ma 4 is almost enough to score in 3 (or support in 3 or do anything else.) Armor only makes sense if the player is already really valuable. In either case you are going to have to ask yourself if you don't want to rather take a skill instead that is cheaper in TV. +Ma is especially valuable when it increases the top speed of your team.

### ***bb) Agility***

Agility usually makes sense to go from 3 to 4 unless you are in the process of building a combo player and this slows it down. Of course if the combo includes Dodge, you're well advised to take that ag4 anyways. Ag5 is good for dedicated carriers for passing abilities and of course for leapers. Ag2 to 3 or 1 to 2 makes sense if you want to use a low agility player as ball carrier to utilize his strength. There is little point in going to agility 6. It won't help to pass better because the non-agility based fumbbl-chance is higher than your agility roll will be. It won't help on bad weather either which will be a 2+ pick anyways. But you'll be great at ball retrieval. You have to consider how much investment in agility makes sense for you since it's 40 TV every time. On a higher developed team an ag6 player can be a powerful ally.

### ***cc) Strength***

It has been mentioned that strength is generally worth it to be taken. With TV cost of 50 you may want to avoid it on particularly squishy players of yours that won't be long in the game. Also players with very poor stat lines won't be able to really take advantage of it. For instance a 90 TV zombie is a doubtful supporter. Only take strength here if your teams TV is already high, otherwise focus more on your key players. They will almost always want it.

## VII. Abbreviations

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| [Skill]er    | Exists in many variants. Refers to a player who has a skill of the specified name [Skill]. Example: Leaper |
| BOB          | Black Orc Blocker  |
| Blodge       | Block & Dodge  |
| BB           | Blood Bowl   |
| BH           | Badly Hurt   |
| BigH         | Big Hands  |
| Cas          | Casualty   |
| CPOMB        | Claw & Mighty Blow & Piling On.  |
| DC           | Diving Catch   |
| D-O          | Dump Off   |
| DP           | Dirty Player   |
| DT           | Diving Tackle  |
| EA           | Extra Arms   |
| FA           | Foul Appearance  |
| FF           | Fan Factor   |
| GFI          | Go For It  |
| HMP          | Hail Mary Pass   |
| Jugs         | Juggernaut   |
| KO           | Knocked Out  |
| MB           | Mighty Blow  |
| PO           | Piling On  |
| RR           | Re-Roll  |
| Snake( eyes) | Dice result of two consecutive 1's. Commonly as only possible result to fail an action.                    |
| SI           | Serious Injury   |
| Tents        | Tentacles  |
| TD           | Touchdown  |
| TH           | Two Heads  |
| Wreckle      | Wrestle & Tackle   |
| Wrodge       | Wrestle & Dodge  |