

SECRET WEAPONS IN BLOOD BOWL

Or "Is That A Chainsaw In Your Pocket, Or Are You Just Happy To See Me?"

By Jervis Johnson

When Blood Bowl came out back in 1993, there were one or two areas of the rules that I would have liked to have been able to spend more time on but, because of annoying things like publication deadlines, could not. One of these areas was the rules for Big Guys in Blood Bowl, and the other was the rules for secret weapons. In both cases I dealt with the lack of development time by placing players that were either Big Guys or armed with secret weapons on the Star Player cards included with the game. This wasn't an ideal solution, but ensured that the players could be included in the game without horribly unbalancing the rules. In the years since Blood Bowl came out, I have had the chance to return to the rules for Big Guys, with the result that they are now integrated into the core game rules, rather than being dealt with only on Star Player cards. The same has not been true for players armed with secret weapons... well, not until now anyway!

The purpose of this article, then, is to update the rules for using secret weapons in Blood Bowl, by making them part of the core game rules rather than something that is hidden away on the Star Player cards in the game. I should say straight away that this doesn't mean you've seen the last of Fungus the Loon or Horkon Heartripper; no, don't worry, all of the old Star Players armed with secret weapons will remain in the game. However, they will be joined by a number of players armed with secret weapons that are included on the team lists for certain teams.

More contentiously, I've taken the chance to streamline and clean up the rules that apply to secret weapons. To be brutally honest, the rules that currently appear in the rulebook did not benefit from the depth of play-testing that was applied to the other core game rules, and are therefore rather overlong and 'fiddly' to use. Proper play-testing invariably allows a designer to refine his first crude attempt at the rules for a game until he has the simplest possible rules required to achieve the desired result. So, although a certain amount of testing was done with the secret weapon rules that appear in the current rulebook (and they are by no means broken beyond repair) they could have done with a bit more refinement to make them smoother and more elegant. Anyway, I have now had the chance to return to the Secret Weapon rules after a gap of almost ten years, and I have taken the opportunity to clean them up a bit and bring them more closely in line with the other rules that appear in the Blood Bowl rulebook.

The result of this work appears on the following pages. At the time of writing, the rules are being play-tested by the coaches that use the Blood Bowl Playtesters Vault on the Blood Bowl website. Early feedback (apart from a couple of reservations) seems positive, and I therefore recommend that you use the rules that appear here in any games that you play. The changes are likely to be properly 'officialised' and then added to the official Blood Bowl rulebook as part of either the 2004 or 2005 Rules Review, depending on how long play-testing the rules takes.



SECRET WEAPON RULES

In the current Blood Bowl handbook there are five pages of special rules for secret weapons. With hindsight I have decided that this is definitely overkill; after all, if we can cope with things like Claws, Horns and Hail Mary Passes in the skills section, why can't we cope with secret weapons there too? Bearing this in mind, I have ditched all of the old rules for secret weapons that appeared on pages 28-32 of the Blood Bowl Handbook, and have replaced them with the following entries for the Skills & Traits section that appears on pages 33-36. In particular, note that the Penalty Roll rules are no longer used and are replaced with the Secret Weapon 'skill'.



New Specialist Skills

The following new specialist skills need to be added to the Skills and Traits section of the Blood Bowl Handbook. Specialist skills may never be learnt as new skills in a league; a player either starts with the skill, or can never have it.

Ball & Chain (Specialist Skill)

Players armed with a ball & chain may only take move actions. To move, place the throw-in template over the player facing up or down the pitch or towards either side-line. Then roll a D6 and move the player to the square indicated; no Dodge roll is required if you leave a tackle zone. Repeat this process until the player runs out of movement. If a square is occupied then the player will throw a block against whoever is in the square, friend or foe! Prone players in an occupied square are pushed back and an Armour roll is made to see if they are injured, instead of the block being thrown at them. The player must follow up if they push back another player, and will then carry on with their move as described above. Roll for injury if the player ever leaves the pitch or is knocked down, treating Stunned results as KO'd (no Armour roll is required).



Bombardier (Specialist Skill)

A coach may choose to have a Bombardier throw a bomb instead of taking any other action with the player. The bomb is thrown using the rules for throwing the football, except that the player may not move before throwing it (he needs time to light the fuse!). A bomb



may be intercepted or caught, in which case the player catching it must throw it again immediately. This is a special bonus action that takes place out of the normal sequence of play, and can happen any number of times in succession. The bomb explodes when it lands in an empty square or an attempt to catch the ball fails, before scattering (ie, bombs don't 'bounce'). If the bomb is fumbled it explodes in the Bombardier's square. When the bomb finally does explode, it knocks over any player in the same square, and knocks over players in adjacent squares on a roll of 4+. Make Armour and Injury rolls for any players knocked over by the blast as normal.

Chainsaw (Specialist Skill)

A player armed with a chainsaw can move normally and attack with the chainsaw instead of making a block. When the chainsaw is used to make an attack, roll a D6 instead of the Block dice. On a roll of 2 or more the chainsaw hits the opposing player, but on a roll of 1 it 'kicks back' and hits the wielder instead! Make an Armour roll for the player hit by the chainsaw, adding +3 to the score. If the roll beats the victim's Armour value then they are injured – roll on the Injury table. If the roll fails to beat the victim's armour value then the attack has no effect. A player armed with a chainsaw may take a Foul action, and adds +3 to the Armour roll, but must roll for kick back as described above. A running chainsaw is a dangerous thing to carry around, and so if a player holding a chainsaw falls over for any reason, the opposing coach is allowed to add +3 to his Armour roll to see if the player was injured.



Poisoned Dagger (Specialist Skill)

A player armed with a poisoned dagger may use it to attack another player instead of throwing a block at them. Make an Armour roll for the victim. If the score is less than or equal to the victim's Armour Value then the attack has no effect. If the score beats the victim's Armour Value then they have been stabbed by the dagger and an Injury roll must be made. Treat a Stunned result on the Injury table as a KO'd result, because of the effect of the poison. Once the dagger has been used to successfully stab a victim (ie, they failed their Armour roll), then the poison is wiped off and any successful use of the knife results in a normal Injury roll.



Secret Weapon (Specialist Skill)

Some players are armed with special pieces of equipment that are called 'secret weapons'. Although the Blood Bowl rules specifically ban the use of any weapons, the game has a long history of teams trying to get weapons of some sort onto the field. Nonetheless, the use of secret weapons is simply not legal, and referees have a nasty habit of sending off players that use them. Because of this, a player with a secret weapon may only be set up on the pitch once per match. It is assumed that once a TD is scored or the half ends, then the referee tells the player he is not allowed to take the field again for the rest of the match. You may 'argue the call' with the referee when he bans one of your players armed with a secret weapon. If you successfully argue the call then the player may be used again. Players armed with secret weapons may never gain Star Player Points and cannot improve.

New Racial Characteristics

In addition to the new Specialist skills described above, one new Racial characteristic is added to the Skills and Traits section of the rules. Like Specialist skills, Racial characteristics can never be learned by players in a league; you either start with them or can never have them at all.

No Hands (Racial Characteristic)

The player is unable to pick up, catch, intercept or carry the ball, either because they literally have no hands or because their hands are full. If they move into the square with the ball then it will scatter, and there will be a turnover if it is their team's turn.

UPDATED TEAM LISTS & STAR PLAYER CARDS

The new Secret Weapon rules require that the team lists for Chaos Dwarf, Dwarf and Goblin teams be updated, as shown opposite. In addition, we've included updated versions of all of the Star Players that use secret weapons. The costs for players armed with secret weapons takes into account that they will usually only play for a single drive, so they are considerably cheaper to hire than normal players.

Although teams other than Chaos Dwarf, Dwarf and Goblin teams do occasionally use players armed with secret weapons (for example, Dark Elf teams are renowned for hiring assassins to help them deal with especially skilled opposing players), it is only Chaos Dwarf, Dwarf and Goblin teams that use them almost as a matter of course, and thus they are the only teams to have them on their rosters.

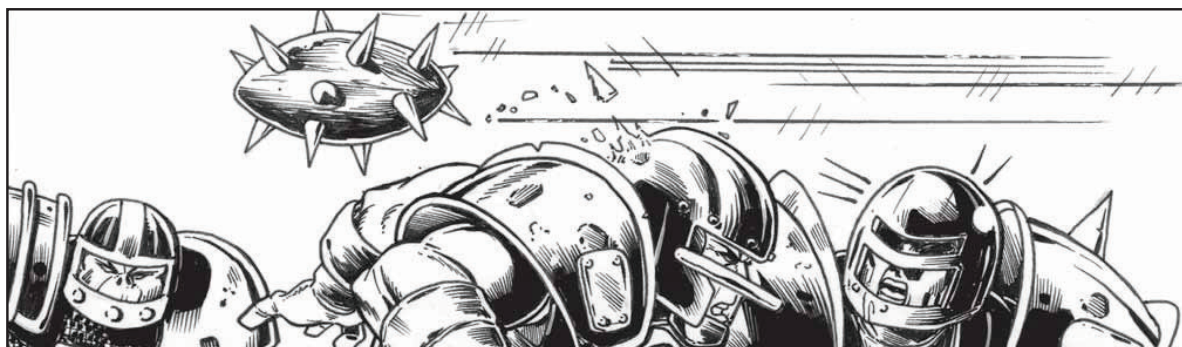
Author

Jervis has been busy in the Playtest Forums with the online community knocking together these rules and the upcoming 'propetual league system'. Look out for more information on that at a future date or go check out the forums yourself at the website.



Further Information Website

The Orc team is available from all good GW stockists.
www.BloodBowl.com



CHAOS DWARF TEAMS

Chaos Dwarfs are the twisted descendants of Dwarf explorers who have been terribly affected by the forces of Chaos, turning them into evil, self-centred creatures. In one way, however, they haven't changed at all – they still love playing Blood Bowl! Chaos Dwarfs are not very numerous and make great use of sneaky Hobgoblin slaves to perform all kinds of tasks, including playing on their Blood Bowl teams.

Qty	Title	Cost	MA	ST	AG	AV	Skills & Traits
0-12	Hobgoblin	40,000	6	3	3	7	None
0-6	Chaos Dwarf Blocker	70,000	4	3	2	9	Block, Tackle, Thick Skull
0-1	Chaos Dwarf Gunner	50,000	4	3	2	9	Sure Hands, Hail Mary Pass, Secret Weapon, Tackle, Thick Skull
0-2	Bull Centaur	130,000	6	4	2	9	Sprint, Sure Feet, Thick Skull

Re-roll counter: 50,000 gold pieces each

CHAOS DWARF TEAM SKILL TABLE

Position	General	Agility	Strength	Passing	Physical
Hobgoblin	Y	N	N	N	N
Blocker	Y	N	Y	N	N
Bull Centaur	Y	N	Y	N	N
Gunner	May not improve				



DWARF TEAMS

Dwarfs seem to be ideal Blood Bowl players, being short, tough, well armoured, and having this stubborn knack of refusing to die! Most successful Dwarf teams work to the principle that if they can take out all the other team's potential scorers, and wear down the rest, then there won't be anybody left to stop them scoring the winning touchdowns!

Qty	Title	Cost	MA	ST	AG	AV	Skills & Traits
0-12	Long Beards	70,000	4	3	2	9	Block, Tackle, Thick Skull
0-2	Runners	80,000	6	3	3	8	Sure Hands, Thick Skull
0-2	Troll Slayers	90,000	5	3	2	8	Block, Frenzy, Dauntless, Thick Skull
0-1	Beardtrimmer	50,000	5	3	2	8	Block, Chainsaw, No Hands, Secret Weapon, Thick Skull
0-1	Bombardier	50,000	4	3	2	9	Accurate, Block, Bombardier, Secret Weapon, No Hands, Thick Skull
0-1	Deathroller	180K	4	7	1	10	Break Tackle, Dirty Player, Mighty Blow, No Hands, Secret Weapon, Stand Firm

Re-roll counter: 40,000 gold pieces each

DWARF TEAM SKILL TABLE

Position	General	Agility	Strength	Passing	Physical
Long Beard	Y	N	Y	N	N
Runner	Y	N	N	Y	N
Blitzer	Y	N	Y	N	N
Troll Slayer	Y	N	Y	N	N
Beardtrimmer,	May not improve				
Bombardier,	May not improve				
Deathroller	May not improve				



GOBLIN TEAMS

A Goblin team's game plan owes much more to hope than potential. Goblins can make quite good catchers because they are small and agile, but the art of throwing is sadly lost to them, while the chances of their blocking anything larger than a Halfling are remote to say the least. Still, this never seems to bother Goblin players, and occasionally the use of a particularly devious secret weapon will even allow a Goblin team to win a match.


Qty	Title	Cost	MA	ST	AG	AV	Skills & Traits
0-16	Goblins	40,000	6	2	3	7	Dodge, Right Stuff, Stuntye
0-1	Bombardier	30,000	6	2	3	7	Bombardier, Dodge, No Hands, Secret Weapon, Stunty
0-1	Pogoer	40,000	7	2	3	7	Dodge, Leap, Secret Weapon, Sprint, Stunty
0-1	Looney	30,000	6	2	3	7	Chainsaw, No Hands, Secret Weapon, Stunty
0-1	Fanatic	60,000	3	7	1	7	Ball & Chain, No Hands, Secret Weapon, Stunty

Re-roll counter: 50,000 gold pieces each

GOBLIN TEAM SKILL TABLE


Position	General	Agility	Strength	Passing	Physical
Goblins	N	Y	N	N	N
Bombardier,	May not improve				
Pogoer,	May not improve				
Looney,	May not improve				
Fanatic	May not improve				






BARIK FARBLAST

DWARF





MOVEMENT

4

STRENGTH

3

AGILITY

2

ARMOUR

9

SKILLS

BLOCK
HAIL MARY PASS
SECRET WEAPON
SURE HANDS
THICK SKULL

TEAMS

DWARF

SPECIAL

NONE

70,000 GOLD PIECES

STAR PLAYER

BARIK FARBLAST

Age: 75, Height: 4'2", Weight: 118 lbs

CAREER STATS:

- Rushing 212 paces
- Passing 193 from 245 for 2,506 paces
- 61 Touchdowns
- 41 Player Fatalities (including 16 on his own team)



BOMBER DRIBBLESNOT

GOBLIN



MOVEMENT

6

STRENGTH

2

AGILITY

3

ARMOUR

7

SKILLS

ACCURATE
BOMBARDIER
DODGE, NO HANDS
SECRET WEAPON
STUNTY

TEAMS

GOBLIN, ORC

SPECIAL

NONE

50,000 GOLD PIECES

STAR PLAYER

BOMBER DRIBBLESNOT

Age: 28, Height: 4'6", Weight: 94 lbs

CAREER STATS:

- 113 Player Fatalities (opposing Team)
- 57 Player fatalities (own team)
- Voted "Player Most Likely To Be Duffed Over By His Own Team-mates" by readers of Spike! Magazine



FLINT CHURNBLADE

DWARF



MOVEMENT

5

STRENGTH

3

AGILITY

2

ARMOUR

8

SKILLS

BLOCK
CHAINSAW, FRENZY
NO HANDS,
SECRET WEAPON,
THICK SKULL

TEAMS

DWARF

SPECIAL

NONE

60,000 GOLD PIECES

STAR PLAYER

FLINT CHURNBLADE

Age: 112, Height: 5'2", Weight: 221 lbs

CAREER STATS:

- Rushing 2,513 paces
- 2 Interceptions returned for 48 paces
- 2 Touchdowns
- 125 Player Fatalities
- 753 Civilian Fatalities
- 13 Referee Fatalities



★ FUNGUS THE LOON ★

GOBLIN



MOVEMENT

4

STRENGTH

7

AGILITY

1

ARMOUR

7

SKILLS

BALL & CHAIN,
MIGHTY BLOW,
NO HANDS,
SECRET WEAPON,
STUNTY

TEAMS

GOBLIN, ORC

SPECIAL

NONE

80,000 GOLD PIECES

STAR PLAYER

FUNGUS THE LOON

Age: 33, Height: 4'5", Weight: 87 lbs

CAREER STATS:

- 212 Player Fatalities (opposing team)
- 43 Player Fatalities (own team)
- One Major Championship Win
- Three Times Spike! Magazine
Goblin Player Of The Year



★ HORKON HEARTTRIPPER ★

DARK ELF



MOVEMENT

6

STRENGTH

3

AGILITY

4

ARMOUR

8

SKILLS

DODGE,
LEAP,
POISONED DAGGER,
SECRET WEAPON,
SHADOWING

TEAMS

DARK ELF

SPECIAL

NONE

60,000 GOLD PIECES

STAR PLAYER

HORKON HEARTTRIPPER

Age: 487, Height: 6'2", Weight: 187 lbs

CAREER STATS:

- Rushing 545 paces
- Receiving 36 passes for 734 paces
- Throwing 19 for 300 paces
- 497 On-pitch Player Fatalities
- 167 Off-pitch Assassinations
- Voted "Greatest Assassin of All Time" by readers of
Spike! Magazine



★ NOBBLA BLACKWART ★

GOBLIN



MOVEMENT

6

STRENGTH

2

AGILITY

3

ARMOUR

7

SKILLS

BLOCK, DODGE,
CHAINSAW,
NO HANDS,
SECRET WEAPON,
STUNTY

TEAMS

CHAOS, GOBLIN, OGRE, ORC

SPECIAL

NONE

50,000 GOLD PIECES

STAR PLAYER

NOBBLA BLACKWART

Age: 32, Height: 4'5", Weight: 89 lbs

CAREER STATS:

- 155 Player Fatalities
- Winner of the CGIM Lifetime Achievement Award bestowed by the Guild of Chainsaw and Garden Implement Manufacturers



★ SCRAPPA SOREHEAD ★

GOBLIN



MOVEMENT

7

STRENGTH

2

AGILITY

3

ARMOUR

7

SKILLS

DODGE, LEAP,
SPRINT,
SURE FEET,
SECRET WEAPON,
STUNTY

TEAMS

CHAOS, GOBLIN, OGRE, ORC

SPECIAL

NONE

50,000 GOLD PIECES

STAR PLAYER

SCRAPPA SOREHEAD

Age: 30, Height: 4'3", Weight: 78 lbs

CAREER STATS:

- Rushing 1,900 paces
- Receiving 87 passes for 2,456 paces
- Throwing 9 for 45 paces
- 25 Player Fatalities
- Holder of 'Highest Leap' trophy for eleven of past thirteen seasons



★ UGROTH BOLGROT ★

ORC



MOVEMENT

5

STRENGTH

3

AGILITY

3

ARMOUR

9

SKILLS

CHAINSAW,
NO HANDS,
SECRET WEAPON

TEAMS

ORC

SPECIAL

NONE

50,000 GOLD PIECES

STAR PLAYER

UGROTH BOLGROT

Age: 152, Height: 7'11", Weight: 257 lbs

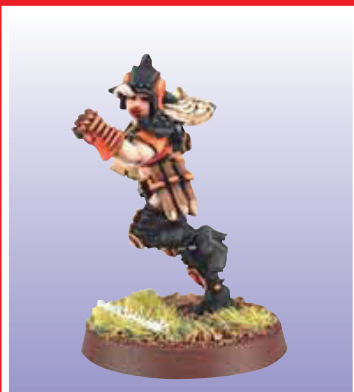
CAREER STATS:

- Rushing 968 paces
- Throwing 3 from 94 for 28 paces
- 8 Interceptions returned for 214 paces
- 7 Touchdowns
- 232 Player Fatalities
- 1,023 Civilian Fatalities
- 3 Referee Fatalities



★ ZARA THE SLAYER ★

HUMAN



MOVEMENT

6

STRENGTH

4

AGILITY

3

ARMOUR

8

SKILLS

BLOCK,
DAUNTLESS,
DODGE,
JUMP UP

TEAMS

AMAZON, DWARF, HUMAN, NORSE

SPECIAL

SEE BACK OF CARD

300,000 GOLD PIECES

STAR PLAYER

ZARA THE SLAYER

Age: 22, Height: 5'10", Weight: 123 lbs

CAREER STATS:

- Rushing 2,956 paces
- Receiving 29 passes for 567 paces
- Throwing 7 for 35 paces
- 116 Player Fatalities
- Voted of 'Best Newcomer, 2503' by readers of Spike! Magazine
- Voted 'Most Hated Player' by readers of Practical Vampirism Magazine

Special: Zara's stakes count as a Poisoned Dagger against any players on Khemri, Necromantic, Undead or Vampire Count teams, and will never 'run out of poison' against players on such teams. Such is her popularity with the fans that no referee would dare to eject her from the game, so she may foul and use the stakes without being sent

