

THE HALFLING PLAYBOOK

or Halflings: Know Your Limits

by Steve Morgan, Head Coach of the Perryvale Punishers

So, you have the daunting task of leading your mighty Halfling heroes onto the field of dreams, and need to devise a plan for getting the little blighters to full time without excessive use of the local casualty department.

First rule of devising your game plan – know your team's weaknesses and strengths.

Halflings are not world renowned in the following areas: running, catching, passing, tackling, or ability to take a firm blow (even from an ailing Snotling).

It is clear from the above that if you are the sort of Blood Bowl player for whom the result is everything, then clearly this is not the team for you. You can stop reading now and get back to your crushing death monster teams on combat drugs with spikey bits!

However, if you like a challenge, want a bit of a laugh, can eat five burgers during the course of a game and want to offer up serious humiliation to your foes should you win, then carry on.

DEFENCE

Halfling defence may, at first glance, look to be as effective as trying to halt a speeding train with a hamster.

Luckily, appearance can be deceptive. With a few basic rules you can do a great job of frustrating the opposition, slowing their advance and breaking down an attack.

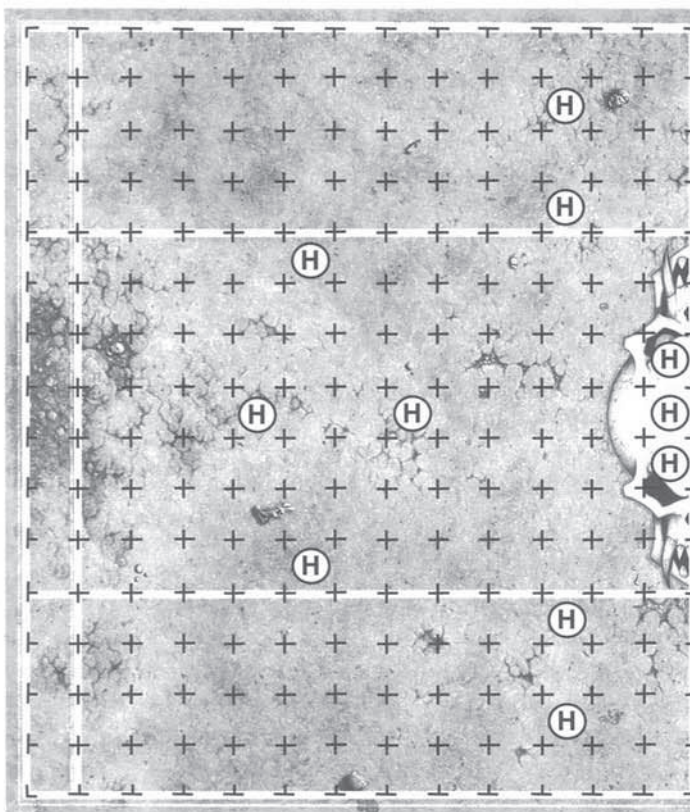
Defend in depth – Many teams can get away with a wide, thin defence of hard-hitting players that is tough to break through. Halflings can't. What I recommend is three lines of defence spaced evenly back to your end-zone. This will allow time to re-group each turn, falling back to a new position of strength (?!!) and restricting the damage to

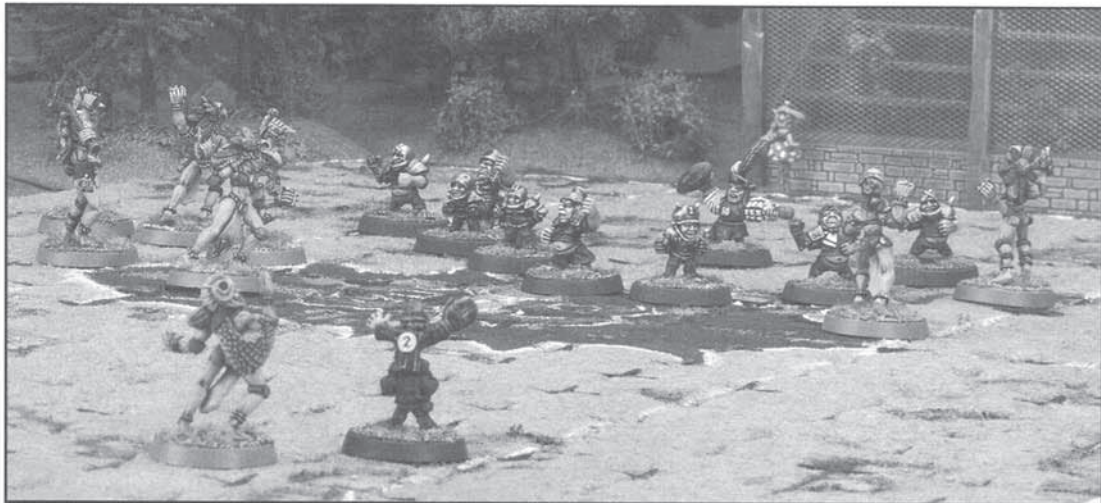
your team. It is a delaying tactic, not allowing an easy score and thus will add to your opponent's frustration in not crushing you into the ground.

Damage limitation – Never allow your turn to end with lots of your little guys in tackle zones. This can only end one way and it ain't pretty. Use the innate 'Dodge' and 'Stunty' skills to full effect and drop back one square at a time (maintaining formation) as he will only be able

Defending

- Keep your players spread out – force your opponent to dodge.
- Three on the line of scrimmage, typically one gets splattered and two get pushed back.
- Constantly fall back – do not block the enemy but force them to go through your tackle zones.
- Conceding a touch down is not always a bad thing.
- Use psychology against your opponent!





The Perryvale Punishers play the All-Stars

to blitz one player per turn. Coupled with point 1 you will force him into some serious dodge roles if he wants to proceed into your lines.

Grab the opportunity – Your tactics may appear so negative, and the opponent so frustrated, that he will make the mistake of underestimating your team in a big way and break with his game plan (a rolling cage can look a bit OTT against a Halfling team). Many players I've played against get impatient, and make an ambitious play or make an optimistic dodge too far. With an isolated ball carrier or ball on the ground Halflings come into their own. Again it's all down to the Dodge and Stunty rules, those unmodified dodge rolls will get you into positions other players can only dream of – make the most of it!

Know when to take a small loss – Sometimes, you need to concede that touchdown for the greater good. If you're defensive plans go wrong, or your opponent is

playing well, don't get your little guy pummelled for nothing. Take it on the chin, open your next chocolate bar, and get ready for the offensive play.

OFFENCE

Now this is the fun bit! Hopefully, you have stopped your opponent from scoring, or at least annoyed the hell out of him in defence. Just imagine the look on his/her face when you go down the other end and do the unthinkable... the big TD! Muffins and fizzy pop all round!

Impossible? I think not, in fact it has been known for the mighty Perryvale Punishers (the finest BB specimens under 4' tall in the known world) to score five (yes five!) touchdowns in one game – just like watching Brazil!!!!

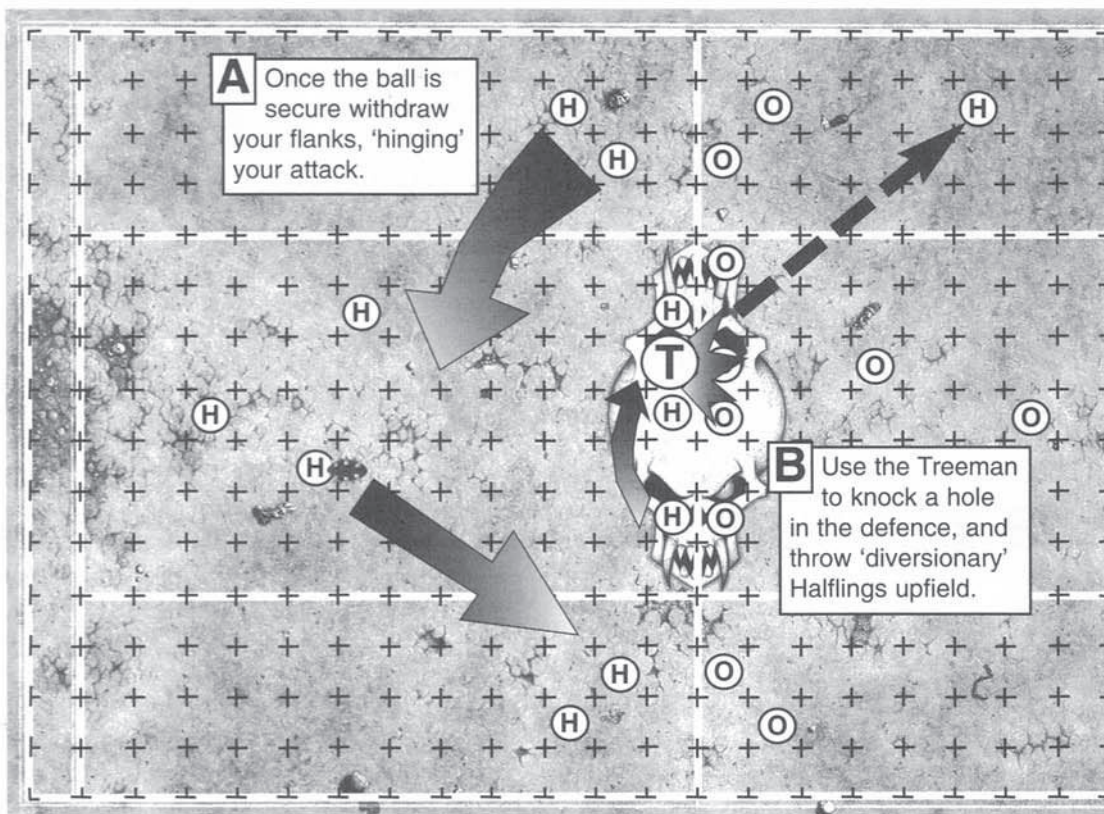
Some pointers...

The lunch box – Similar to the cage, but a little more fragile. Protect the ball carrier within three lines of Halflings and rumble down the flank. Remember the basic rule of not leaving your guys in tackle zones, and then pick off stray defenders by ganging up and blitzing them aside.

Aerial assault – Hugely entertaining and rather effective. Use a Treeman to launch Halfling avec ball downfield and to glory! Somewhat risky, but hey, why let all that 'Right Stuff' go to waste. Also good for pulling off that last minute winner, or capitalising on some good spoiling defensive work to get good field position.

The feint – One problem you should not have is breaking through a defensive line, not with





Attacking – The Lunch Box

- 'Hinge' your attack.
- Use your Treeman on the line of scrimmage to knock down any strong opposition on the defending side.
- Throw at least 2 halfings up-field.
- You can score in under 4 turns.

all those Dodge re-rolls. Make a sacrifice of a diversionary player to draw defenders away from the real point of attack. (It's amazing the lengths some players will go to get rid of one solitary Halfling downfield).

The elusive Halfling – If you get a sniff of the goal line, go for it. It's amazing how small a gap you need to get one of the little fellows through, so go for it!

TEAM SELECTION

Quantity over quality is definitely the way to go (you don't really have a choice here). I would recommend you go for as much 'extra' stuff as you feel comfortable with when starting out though.

Treeman – I only ever start with one of these (usually Deeproot). My aim is to have a Halfling team with the odd Treeman, not a Treeman team with some small blokes running about! Too many 'Big Guys' diminishes the achievement winning a game.

Master Chef – A definite no-brainer as far as I am concerned. You can keep your fancy pants wizards, these guys are great. Stealing re-rolls and a quick fry-up at half time. What more could you ask for?

Apothecary – Also essential from the start, just incase your Star Player or Treeman takes a pasting (do not waste his ability on a normal player – they just aren't worth it).

Re-rolls – I generally just get one of these, maybe two tops, relying on my Chef to get me the rest and deprive the opposition of theirs.

Fan-Factor – Usually I start with a Fan-Factor of 3 or 4.

Other teams just don't have the luxury of so much cool stuff to begin with, what's more you still have enough money left for loads of standard players, as they are as cheap as chips (believe me you will need them, the casualty rate for your team will be grim).

OVERALL

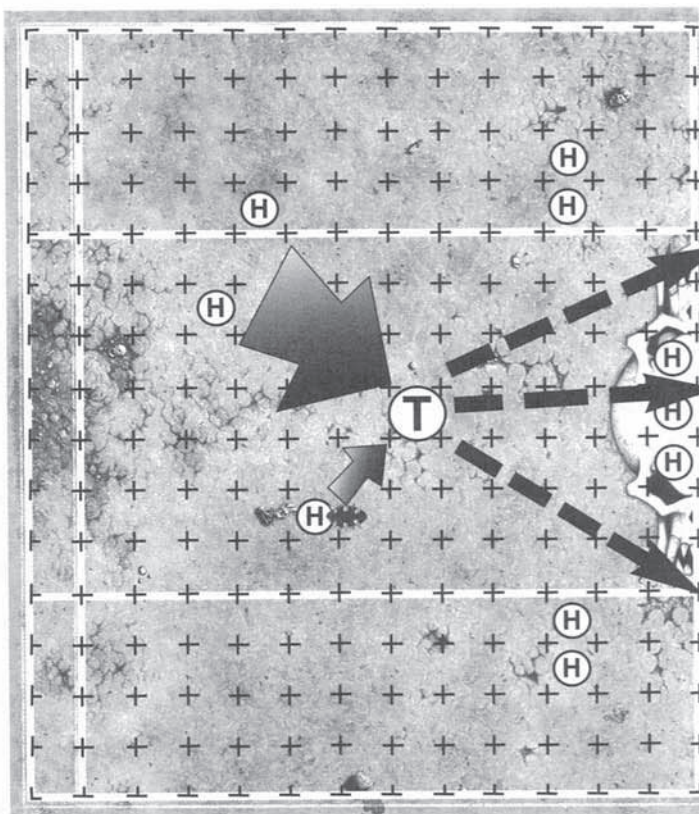
Well I think that is enough of my mad ramblings, but a quick summary and last minute thoughts are in order...

- Have fun
- Play to your strengths, don't get involved in a blocking match
- Know when to take the short-term loss
- Be adventurous – when you see an opening, go for it
- Eat when playing – it really does help (honest!)
- Name all your players and mourn them as they fall in the line of duty (this takes the form of eating cream cakes, naturally)
- Gloat when you score, mistakes are often made by an opponent who is frustrated/angry/homicidal
- Gloat outrageously should you win a game, this is a great chance for humiliating fellow players!
- By the way, did I mention have fun!

★★★ Did you know...

According to Halfling tradition, everyone who plays in a game gets to join in a gigantic slap-up tea after the game is over! It is thus not unusual to see injured Halflings get up from their stretchers and tear off in the direction of the dressing room when the final whistle goes!

The Moot Mighties are one of the few Halfling teams that opponents actually fear to play. It has to be said that this has rather more to do with the fact that the team includes the mighty Treeman blocker Thicktrunk Strongbranch than any other reason, although the 'Halfling hit squads' used by the team, who specialise in finishing off opponents laid low by Strongbranch, are universally hated as well. Still, as the Mighties' head coach, Slowchap Eatmoore, points out "When you're stuck with players like these guys, ya gotta take advantage of any edge you can get."



Attacking – The launch pad

- Keep your players off the front line.
- Stagger your defensive line.
- Collect the ball, hand-off then get the Treeman to throw the ball-carrier upfield.
- Throw as many players upfield as possible, to use as support and diversionary players.
- Once you have enough players, protect the ball-carrier by forming a 'lunch-box' as described earlier.