

Afterlife Unlimited – LRB6 Khemri Playbook

By Thrice damned Martin Lærkes



Some 2000 years before the rise of the Empire, the first human civilization arose. Millennia ahead of its time, the prosperous Nehekhara civilization lay along the great river that runs through modern day Araby. The Nehekhara were preoccupied with death and the afterlife, and no magnificent feat in life could parallel the glory of a splendid mausoleum in death. In time, grave sites grew in size from mounds to pyramids and finally into great necropolis – cities of the dead.

But the Nehekhara also had another favorite pastime – Blood Bowl. The greatest players and coaches were rewarded with splendid burials upon their deaths – and in Blood Bowl death is quite frequent. In time, more and more players were entombed alongside each other, in special halls of the necropolis – halls that became known as Halls of Fame.

Why play khemri?

Before looking in depth at the team, it is worth considering what the pros and cons of the khemri team are. Or to put it more bluntly: Why on earth would anyone play khemri?



Looking at the roster it is clear that the khemri are both slow and clumsy. Reliable ball handling and finesse is simply out of their reach. So bash/grind is really all they do - and they don't even do it that well! Orcs and dwarfs seem far better at the trademark khemri tactics. Never the less - embrace your shortcomings: There'll be endzone stalling and forcing your opponent to score quickly, rather than actually stopping them. If that doesn't sound like your cup of tea, then I'd suggest playing something else. With khemri - unlike dwarfs and orcs - you shouldn't be ashamed when you play hard.



Skeletons come with AV7, Regeneration and Thick Skull. While this hardly sounds thrilling - they can be developed into good LOS fodder against those popular 'piling on. mighty blow, claw, frenzy' basher teams out there.



4 ST5 players. Not bad at all.



Ball handling. You're the only team without a single AG3 player. Your options are limited.



On paper, you're a bashy team. Well, at least you aren't finesse team. But you start with no mighty blow, very little block, and your linemen and throwers are quite breakable. You'll have a hard time getting the numbers advantage against your opponent.



Your linemen are not impressive. Your blitzers and throwers are both probably the worst of their kind in the game.



Your Tomb Guardians come with decay - and no apothecary. And unlike Rotters, TGs are the lynchpin of your team, so if one dies. It hurts. Not to mention that they're very hard to skill back up. It may sound unlikely, but you'll learn to fear claw and fouling assists.



Khemri teams develop very slowly. You don't score more than twice. You rarely pass. And until well into development, you don't do a lot of damage. Thank goodness for the MVP.

In short: If you love a challenge, and you love playing relentless remorseless grinding - but need an excuse to be that heartless, then Khemri is for you!

Starting Team

1 million in gold is not enough to get everything you need, so you'll have to start by making some tough decisions. For that reason I personally prefer starting with just 1 Thro-Ra. The one that picks up the ball should carry it over the goal line, so no need for two from the start really.

The big decision is whether to go with 3 Guardians + 2 BlitzRas, or 4 TGs and 1 B. The 4 ST5 players are nice. They just don't really do much. And they are turnover magnets. Quite frankly the extra block player is very nice to have: Your tactics revolve around blocking, blocking and blocking - and blockless blocking can really suck up your rerolls in no time. But then you'll miss the 4th Tomb Guardian, and have nothing to show for it that a Norse lineman doesn't have.

Roster 1		Roster 2		Roster 3	
4 Tomb Guardians	400K	3 Tomb Guardians	300K	4 Tomb Guardians	400K
1 BlitzRa	90K	2 BlitzRa	180K	2 BlitzRa	180K
1 ThroRa	70K	1 ThroRa	70K	2 ThroRa	140K
5 Skeletons	200K	6 Skeletons	240K	3 Skeletons	120K
3 ReRolls	210K	3 ReRolls	210K	2 ReRolls	140K
0 Fan Factor	0K	0 Fan Factor	0K	0 Fan Factor	0K
970K		1000K		980K	

Version 1 has 30K spare cash, to save or to spend on coaching staff. Version 2 has an extra player and you really need 12 (heck, 14) players ASAP - because you'll only win by grinding, and you need to field 11 players for every drive in order to do that. But if you lose a bit - and Khemri often do - that last Tomb Guardian could be a long way off!

Finally, the 3rd roster was suggested to me by experienced Khemri coach Nestyr. Nestyr suggests that the extra speed can be a big advantage, and that it outweighs the disadvantage of playing cautiously with just 2 rerolls. After all, you have a smattering of block, and a skill reroll for the only necessary ball handling roll: The pick-up. If you do this, I'd suggest trying to skill a ThroRa on your first game, and then give him Leader.



Khemri team painted by Plasmoid and paintedfigs.com

General Tactics

Your TGs are your only real advantage, so be sure to maximize it. Always push knocked down opponents towards TGs, so the TGs will tie up more than one player each. If you need to push forward, then try to have each TG exert a TG and 2 blockless players. That way the opponents will either need to attract lots of assists, dodge, or throw a risky block. Many teams will have a hard time handling your TGs, so try to keep them close, but not too close. If you position them just right, your opponents should have a hard time getting the assists for a 2-dice block on any of them.

Also, remember that while fouling is tempting, it could easily cost you a player. So when you do foul - and you should - make sure you have players on the bench, make sure the target is worth fouling, and make sure you have LOTS of assists.

Speaking of fouling and TGs - let me address the most common misconception: Starting khemri is **not** a bash team. It's a control team. You don't have any way to dish out any real pain. And your linemen are squishy. So you're unlikely to end up outnumbering your opponent. Later on you could - and should - develop the ability to remove opposing players from the pitch, but that doesn't really change your tactics. They just make them a tad easier to apply. Controlling the pitch is easier against a decimated team - sure - but often you'll just have to do it with your strength advantage and careful positioning.

Think of khemri kind of like dwarfs - if anything goes wrong on your offense, then you're probably too slow to compensate. However, unlike dwarfs, things actually **are** quite likely to go wrong. Blockless, painless blocking as your only viable tactic - supported by terrible ball control - could very well go sour for you. You need to work hard to stop that from happening.

So you need to play a tight controlled game. Don't take any unnecessary risk - and your positioning will be very important. Don't GFI unless you have to. And don't get cute with the ball. Pick it up, and hang on to it until turn 8 - or until you absolutely have to do something with it. The pick-up is the most risky point of your offensive drive - treat it as such! Keep lots of players close for that first pick-up. Half your team is not overkill. You don't need to be anywhere until turn 8 comes around, so don't send receivers into your opponents half, when you both know you won't be using them.

All that being said. Some opponents are convinced that you cannot make a 4+. Especially if you're playing conservatively anyway. Don't close your eyes to those 4+ rolls during the game that will reap a massive reward. 4+ with a reroll works 75% of the time.

In the end: If something goes wrong, consider your league rules: If ties are worth anything, then you should at least consider playing for the tie.

Tactics - the 2-1 Grind

So far I've just implied it, but I'd better state it up front: You really only have one solid option: The infamous 2-1 grind. The basic premise is simple: You don't really care if your opponent scores, as long as he scores early. That gives you 2 looong drives, hopefully a 7 turn drive and an 8 turn drive, where you never let go of the ball, and don't score until turn 8. Final result: 2-1. Yay.

First decision comes if you win the coin toss: Kick or Recieve. Most teams will recieve, and against really brutal bashy teams you probably should too, but there's an advantage to kicking instead. If your opponent scores early, or if you force him to do so, then you can have your first long grind. Hopefully you'll cause lots of damage, and at half time your opponent will only have 1 chance to roll for KO recovery! If you recieve, he'll get 2 chances - 1 at your score, 1 at half time, then one more if he manages to score! If you opted to kick first and managed to tie 1-1 at half time, then half of the KOs you inflicted might as well have been badly hurts! They won't be back until it's too late. Muhahahaaaa.

Whether you go first or your opponent does, you need to consider whether he can One-Turn-Score on you or not. If he can, you have to do your utmost to whack any player who is useful in an OTS attempt. If he succeeds, then you're very unlikely to win. Oh, come to think of it - an opposing kicker is also high on your must-hurt list.

Ah well. On your opponents hopefully only offense, you need him to score quickly. And he knows this. So you should know that he knows this. (Confused 😊) He'll probably want to delay scoring as long as possible. Quick finesse teams can dance around near your endzone forever - especially if you don't come after them! Naturally - taking the ball away from him and scoring a defensive touchdown would be sweet. But even if you knock the ball loose, grabbing a free ball and escaping with it is really not your strong suit. So your very real second objective is to force the TD.

Pateintly hunting the ball or trying slim shots at a sack probably isn't your best option. At the very least you'll need to consider how likely you are to succeed against the likely loss of a turn (and a team reroll) every time you fail. A khemri team that gets into a scrum over the ball on defense, only to be scored on a few turns later is most likely a khemri team that won't have time to equalize in the same half! (And as stated earlier, if this happens, you need to know whether a tie is worth it for you. Because over-extending for a 2, 3 or even 4 turn score could very well get you scored on again - in which case the game can not be salvaged.

Quite often, your best bet is to trap some players and kick the living snot out of them. Let your opponent know that if he doesn't score now, 3 players will be mighty blow blocked, one will be crowd surfed and the most valuable one will get fouled hard (if you have replacements on the bench). 🏈

Don't get suckered by offensive threats/decoys - if he knows the 2-1 grind, he won't use them. Don't commit lots of players to covering them. It'll just mean his cage will have no problem repelling your remaining few players.

Once he scores, it is time for your offense. The order of the day is simple: Score on your 8th turn. Advance steadily, but no reason to get there ahead of time. And cause as much damage as you can while doing so. Don't jeopardize the ball. maintain your cage. And remember that on turn 8, you don't want to be forced to do a 4+ dodge, so you'll want to avoid getting into 2 (or more) TZs with the ball carrier.

If your opponent knows the 2-1 grind, he'll likely ignore any fake offensive threats you're setting up. He'll know you won't score early, and play accordingly. That's when things get really interesting. Either way - Don't chicken out. This is what you do - so be heartless.

Tactics offense

In my experience, opponents will try to railroad you towards the sideline. Letting you advance a bit only to halt your advance next turn. Also, when the cage really moves, the Tomb Guardians can be left behind. That's when your opponents will pounce. So don't go fast unless you have to. Or sprint, then stop, allowing your TGs to catch up.

In fact, it may just be me, but I've found that due to both of the above, my khemri team often moves in a distinctive zig-zag. 4 square forward and towards the sidelines. Then a no-advance shift back towards both the middle and the TGs.

Be aware that a standard x-cage is probably no good for you. You often need a larger and looser formation. If an opponent manages to blitz a corner off your cage and exert a TZ on your ball carrier, you're unlikely to try the 4+ dodge, so you'll need your blitz, most likely meaning that you won't go anywhere this turn. A 2nd man inside the cage might also help with this.

On a completely different note, picking up with AG1 isn't that much harder than with AG2. Against an opponent who can attack reliably inside the cage it just might be your only option. Or if you're trying to skill up a Tomb Guardian and you're feeling cheeky.

Tactics - defense

Khemri defense has been all but completely covered above. But it needs to be said, that you have to consider where you stick your TGs. On the defensive LOS, some teams will have a hard time handling them. But they'll likely break into your backfield and score without causing any damage. Perhaps that is what you want 😊

But TGs often do well in the 2nd line of defense. Weak teams will have hard time getting past them when assists aren't readily available. And bashy teams won't be able to just tear them down with guard - pinning them for several turns, or destroying them with claw and fouls.

One last thing: If you happen to successfully steal the ball from the opposing team, then check the turn count. Sometimes the best thing to do is to just hang on to the ball until the time runs out. If you try to score with too little time left, then you're likely to overextend and cough up the ball for a late score by the opposition. That's the absolute nightmare outcome for khemri!



Khemri team painted by Urb

Team development

Keep your team value slim - an opponent with a wizard or certain star players (like Eldril, a chainsaw or a bomb) will be very hard to handle for you. On the other hand, you need a reasonably deep bench, so you can have 11 players for the entire game.

I recommend a 14 man roster.

I also, controversially, suggest that you should at least consider going without 2 ThroRas. On the other hand, if you know you'd take MA+ on a skellie, then you might as well take the 2nd ThroRa. Just remember that it has AV7 and no thick skull, so it will be a target.

Finally, when your blocking stability increases with skilled linemen and hopefully TGs, you could trim your TV by 'firing' a Team Reroll.

4 things really make a khemri team click: An AG+ ball carrier. A blodge ball carrier. ST increases (not so much on the TGs as on everyone else), and lots of guard on doubles. Two of those will make your team respected. Three or four will make it feared.

The first turn pick-up and the potential last turn desperate maneuver will benefit greatly from AG3. If a ThroRa rolls your first AG+, take it and don't look back. Reliable ball handling is so crucial in fact, that if a skeleton rolls your first AG3, you should at least consider taking it. The ThroRas can then be neat replacement blitzers with block and tackle. If AG3 happens to land on a BlitzRa, I highly recommend turning him into your primary ball carrier. There are even some surprisingly useful ST-skills for a ball carrier. Stand Firm has proven invaluable to me, when I had to go near the sidelines. Juggernaut can also help. Other than that, sure hands is great. And both fend and kick-off return are at least worth considering (didn't take either one myself). Also, as your AG3 player scores, hopefully he'll get enough skill rolls to eventually get Dodge. Heck, if nobody gets the AG, and a BlitzRa rolls doubles, I might seriously consider him as a long shot candidate for Dodge, Sure Hands, Break Tackle (and Stand Firm).

Khemri need a blodger (with sure hands) in the cage. Sometimes the cage will crumble. Sometimes opposing teams have a specialist that will go right through the cage. You need a shot at hanging on to the ball until you can recover.

As for ST and guard - your main advantage is your strength. Some teams will have a hard time handling that. Buff it significantly, and you'll get really hard to handle. It's simple synergy.

The Positions - development

Linemen: You'll need a smattering of block to stabilize your blocking game. Guard on doubles. But don't get all excited as these guys probably won't get to 2 skills. If you do, fend is your best bet. These guys just need to hold their own for as long as possible and 'blend' (Block-Fend) will really help them do that. If your TGs are fortunate enough to get some block, you could go fend-first on a few skellies.

Wrestle will also give you blocking stability, but I often find that I'd rather have my skellies standing than prone.

Perhaps just one, to compensate for the fact that not many players will have the time to take tackle.

Oh yeah. A dirty player will come in handy.

So could kick, but that could be taken by a ThroRa.

ThroRas: ThroRas are the most likely ball carriers. Block and Kick-off Return is probably the way to go. Dodge on doubles. Seriously. You need a blodger with the ball inside your cage to stand a chance. Leader is also great for keeping your TV low.

It is surprising how important Sure Hands is when it comes to raking in random or planned

SPPs - so unlike the skeletons, these might go to 3 skills. Tackle is not a bad pick for a ThroRa with Block.

I personally would not develop a 'real' thrower - as you have no reliable receivers. But if something has gone wrong, and you need to make a semi-quick TD or lose everything, then a ThroRa with Kick-Off Return and Accurate can be a risky way to speed things up. Just be warned.

BlitzRas: IMO, you need these guys to hit hard. I think they should both be mighty blow + piling on. Perhaps one of them should take tackle first. You need these guys to hit really hard, if you want to stay ahead in the attrition race. Also, if these guys get scary, they'll divert fouls away from your TGs - and you really don't want your TGs to get fouled, due to their decay.

Tomb Guardians: Generally I'd take might blow first. It generates SPPs, and it causes fear (see below). Perhaps one of them should take guard, to better set up 3-dice blocks on the LOS - blockless 2-dice blocks eat rerolls and cause turnovers, most likely before you've attempted the pick-up, as a pick-up has a real chance of ending your turn.

One with piling on may also be worth it, I've certainly enjoyed mine, but it may prove dangerous to leave a decay player on the ground.

Break tackle also looks quite handy, though honestly I haven't used the one I took half as much as I thought I would.

Eventually, mighty blow and guard on everyone is probably the way to go. Block on doubles. As a third non-doubles option, I'd probably rate Stand Firm over Break tackle and Piling On. Blockless ST5 players will often find themselves 1-dice blocked, or even 2-dice-against blocked, mostly by block players. And having done so myself against khemri, I know it can be quite effective. Stand Firm will make that a lot harder, earn you extra blocks and will also help you TGs when you need to push forward against an enemy that just keeps dodging back.

Block naturally rocks. If you get one, you might consider Multiple Block. Sounds lame perhaps, but it means you can commit just 2 TGs to blocking the LOS - you'll both have block skill on more blocks *and* you'll be able to keep more TGs near the pick-up zone.

Finally: Fear

As your team develops, you need to cause fear. That's why I take mighty blow on the TGs - even though there are more reliable skills to take. Same with Piling On on the BlitzRas. The heart of the matter is: If an underdog takes a wizard against you - you're screwed. You need him to take extra apothecaries instead. You need him to fear for his players. You need him to not tie up your TGs with linefodder, so they can go where they're needed.

In the same vein, I've seen khemri coaches suggest taking an Igor when you're an underdog, because of your decay guys. I say: Be fearless - be undead - suck it up. You need every advantage you can get in every game. Rather than the passive Igor, take something that will help you win. Worry about the consequences later. That being said, if you're up against lots of claw - don't be a fool. Take the Igor.

