

Necro-Tacticum

Tactics for the Blood Bowl Necromancer Team

(24/3 2011: <http://graveyard-gothika.webs.com/necrotacticum.htm>)

Blood Bowl is a complex, but not complicated, game. The complexity arises from the multitude of variables, such as position on the field, skills, and the luck of the dice.

The Necromancer Team:

Team Composition and Character: Undead teams are somewhat defined by what they cannot have and what replaces that. Your Rerolls are the most expensive in the game, at 70,000 each, and this increases to 140,000 each if you purchase them after creation. You cannot afford all of your positionals at start, nor many rerolls. Composition thus comes down to an initial choice of playstyle and liberal conservatism. You must learn to live off of 2 or 3 rerolls and control your impulses to have the Undead commit to agility rolls and unwise blocking schemes.

You are NOT allowed the use of an Apothecary to heal any of your players. In its place is the Necromancer who can raise any non-Stunty opponent of Strength 4, or less, as a regular Zombie. Sorry, kiddies, no racial/skill/characteristic benefits transfer....

Team Players

Zombie: This is your default player should you ever need a Journeyman replacement (for being under 11 players after a match). This is also the player stat line you will raise should you kill a qualifying opponent player. Zombies start with Regeneration and access to General skills only.

Cost 40,000 Cheap, persistent fodder.... Sacrifices for the line of scrimmage! Tie downs for forcing dodges.... Feel the Zombie Love!

Ma 4 Among the slowest players in the game, should you go down (and you will without Block/Dodge) your options are limited to standing up (cost of 3ma) and possibly moving one square into a better position. You can still Blitz and Go For It if you must. Your Zombies will spend most of their time on/near the Line of Scrimmage as pursuit is NOT their forte....

St 3 Standard Strength for most Blood Bowl players. Lacking non-doubles access to Guard, the Zombie must rely on strategic chain-blocks (or the Dauntless skill) to reach parity with the likes of Black Orcs, Chaos Warriors, Big Guys, et. al.

Ag 2 Sub-standard, but not the worst, agility in the game. These clods are not your typical ball-carriers.... However, remember two blight spots about Ag2: should you find yourself with the ball (lucky interception/bounce), you hand-off just as well as anyone in the game; and, should you require tactical repositioning, an Ag2 player dodges into an open space with a 50% success rate.... Don't attempt this unless A) it's ultra-critical/game-on-the-line that you do this RIGHT NOW, or, B) it's your last move of the turn and whether that Zombie is up or down DOES NOT MATTER!

Av 8 You are really going to appreciate the difference between Av7 and Av8. This will allow your skill-less wonders to pick themselves up, time and again, to be persistent pest-ilences to your opponent. This also allows you to "give" a Zombie to a more powerful (yet low Ag) opposing player to tie him up while the rest of your team scampers about....

Skills: Regeneration. It's a 50/50 crap shoot on whether you're truly gonna lose this player to an injury.... In a season you'll hear opposing coaches scream, "Why won't you die!!!" (Graveyard Gothika Zombies played 26 games before losing their first lineman)....

Skill Advancement: General (only) limits what you can do. Most Zombies should get Block first, with one Zombie getting Kick asap. Kick will allow you to position the ball for your Wights/Werewolves/Ghouls to turnover your opponent, or place the ball deep enough to waste precious time for the opposition. Second skill depends on league composition... I usually go with Dauntless to reach parity with higher strength teams, though Tackle would serve well against dodgy types like Elves.... **GUARD ON DOUBLES!!!** You never have enough Guard.... With casualties being the only likely avenue of advancement, a 3-skill Zombie is a rarity.

Stat Increases: ALWAYS TAKE STRENGTH (6+6) INCREASES.... Agility increases (5+6) are a conundrum... while an Ag 3 Zombie does have its charms (better dodging ability) the slow Ma restricts its usage. I'd say take a regular skill. For Av/Ma increases on a (6+4) take a regular skill and a doubles skill on (5+5).

Wight: This is the standard blitzer-type for the Necromancer and Undead teams. Wights have access to General and Strength skills which mitigate their otherwise average stats. Wights start with Regeneration and Block.

Cost 90,000 Mildly expensive, yet irreplaceable, workhorses of the Necros. Take two immediately!

Ma 6 Average speed nevertheless allows the Wight to go most places necessary for assists and blitzes.

St 3 Average strength, they will find themselves generally lending, or needing, help; thus working in tandem with other players.

Ag 3 With average agility, there are much worse ball-carriers than Wights. Allowing them to score in early games will benefit the team as a skilled Wight is a feared Wight. Be cautious with Ag 3, as this makes the Wight a generalist... one who can do everything... just not well....

Av 8 This makes the Wight somewhat resilient to attacks, though being such a powerful piece, you'll find the Wight pummeled repeatedly in attempts to push/block/foul them out of the game....

Skills: Block is the king of skills and keeps one up 17% more of the time than those without! On a 1 die, offensive block/blitz you only have one chance in 6 of going down yourself. Juggernaut and Wrestle may still be problematic. Regeneration is the same as Zombies, above.

Skill Advancement: Lacking enough Guard, and needing to assist the Werewolves, it's always my first choice on a Wight.... Past this it's a matter of taste, although Mighty Blow helps tremendously if you are going to rely on casualties to upgrade your Wights. Strip Ball and Tackle are also popular skills for Wights. I'd go with Dodge on Doubles, though circumstances may dictate otherwise.

Stat Increases: Strength and Agility always. A roll of (6+4) makes you choose between increased range and increased survivability. I give the nod to +Ma, as it allows the Wight to keep up with Ghouls and Weres much better. Not to mention the blitz range increasing so you can more keep up with Elves and Gutter Runners. A roll of (5+5) is better spent on an Agility skill.

Werewolf: For my money this is the incredible, necessary show-piece that is the only reason to play Necromancer over Undead! Superior range and Claws (combined with the mercurial Frenzy) make this player tres-dangerous (to himself and others)... thank goodness he also Regenerates.... Weres have access to General and Agility skills....

Cost 120,000 Most expensive positional in your arsenal... take two anyway!!! They're well worth the price....

Ma 8 Weres can move nearly anywhere on the field. Go For Its (GFIs) increase the range even more... as does the use of Frenzy (out to the maximum Ma, with GFIs, of 10). Follow ups with Frenzy do not require rolls for dodges, but do require rolls of any GFIs. Ma 8 can be used to move the ball quickly upfield, chase down the opposition, and a host of other irritating options that require putting the wolf "just so".... Getting up still leaves you with 5 Ma....

St 3 This would be fine were it not for the temptation Frenzy engenders. You will need to tactically position supporting players for double assists (being able to assist even if a push result is rolled on the first block/blitz) or quickly risk having your most expensive asset on the ground and ready to be fouled....

Ag 3 Generalist's agility... still it is the best on the team without stat increases. Remember that hand-offs, if necessary, are more reliable than passes. You will start with 2 or 3 rerolls, so be careful how many times you roll Agility dice.

Av 8 With a big target painted on your furry chest, it's never enough but will keep you in the game longer than Av 7. Keep moving, keep your friends close and your closest enemies shredded and stunned on the ground, or in the kill box. Conversely stay off the ground and only Frenzy with properly set up assists and only when necessary.

Skills: Regeneration has been mentioned, above, and will hopefully extend your life when the silver bb's fly (those annoying rolls that injure you). Claw will allow you to selectively hunt any opponent (you break armor on 8+). Frenzy is the great hope of the Werewolves that requires more skills to be effective... see the remarks above... and below....

Skill Advancement: Frenzy darn near DEMANDS you take Block and Dodge as the first two skills! You have to stay up. Doubles demand Mighty Blow to maximize the destructive power of the Claws. Ordinarily the advice would stop here, but Weres are quite capable of going further. Depends upon what you want to do with them. Catch is certainly appealing, though begs putting Pass on another player, requiring doubles. Sidestep, Fend and Sprint are all good, as well as Strip Ball. Weres are the most flexible of your players....

Stat Increases: Strength (squeal!) and Agility increases always!!! Unless you're banking on TWO Ma increases + sprint + sure feet, I'd take +Av for survivability on any roll of 10.

Flesh Golem: Here comes the big hoo-doo of contention between Necromancer coaches... whether or not the Flesh Golem is worth having... and I'm on both sides of the fence. Some say that the skills given (Regeneration, Stand Firm, Thick Skull), even with 4 Strength, is significantly insufficient for the cost. Others like the durable traffic stop capability of the FG... both sides agree that they skill up WAY TOO SLOW! Nevertheless, I've rode a pair of Flesh Golems to three league championships....

Cost 110,000 Without a doubt this is an expensive piece! His inclusion gives options along the Strength and General skills path, but he relies on casualties for advancement and starts without Block!

Ma 4 Slow as a Zombie! Usually found on the line, though having a Golem paired in the wide zones with a Wight/Were is a great option... and if he's knocked down, he ain't going nowhere (Stand Firm)! I've also used him from the wide zone position to move in behind, and pin, the opposition line against my Zombies....

St 4 It's nice to not get totally outbashed... but the Golem's detractor's will tell you that two of them is too little for the job... especially compared to the likes of Black Orcs and Chaos Warriors. They may be right.... Again, I set mine (paired) in the wide zones as immovable assists against your Were/Wight getting blitzed on the kick-off....

Ag 2 Unless he has an accident, he won't be intercepting, dodging or handling the ball in ANY capacity....

Av 9 Nearly the most durable piece on any field.... He'll be up and down like a roller coaster... albeit, a REALLY SLOW roller coaster....

Skills: Regeneration is as useful as it is on any other Necro player, though high armor value will not have you relying as heavily on it. Thick Skull may be appropo, but stunned and knocked out are nearly the same for someone who moves like molasses in January.... Stand Firm is my favorite of the Golem's skills, as I use it to stick him in your face and block up lanes of travel. If you set up in the wide zones, mentioned earlier, and move/blitz in behind the opposing line of scrimmage, you can set up just right to cause the pursuers of your Werewolf/Wight combo to move that one extra square that denies an assist or blitz... or cause additional Go For It rolls that might be failed.

Skill Advancement: With miserable agility, the Golem relies only on casualties for skill ups.... Block is the ONLY first skill... followed by Guard as the second. Then Mighty Blow if you should make it to a third. I really can't recommend ANY deviation for a doubles. Stay on the Block, Guard, Mighty Blow path. (Having said that, I've taken Dodge on a first skill doubles with Grave Danger's "Venom".... It kept him on his feet vs the first three after-skill, received blocks of his career!)

Stat Increases: Take Strength and hope it helps with casualties. Agility, Movement and Armor upgrades are wasted on a Golem... take normal skills.

Ghouls: I didn't use ghouls for two out of the first three seasons. The weak armor (7) and lack of Regeneration (not to mention having the same skill access as the superior Werewolves) just didn't seem worth the risk of buying, then losing, this player. I REALLY may have been wrong! Ghouls

open up the quick screen plays that allow you to put Wights and Weres up front where they can blitz out the opposition and then receive the hand-off or pass from the Ghouls....

Cost: 70,000 Moderate cost (almost twice that of a Zombie) for a fragile piece. On the surface not that cost efficient, but reaches great synergies with Wights/Weres. Take two, if this is your preferred style, but you will give up Golems to have them.

Ma 7 The complimentary speedster to the Wights and Weres! Put a pair in the backfield for receiving and you can often chain a hand-off and (if necessary) a quick to short pass to move the ball 3/4 of the way up the field! Also often moves these marvelous pests into positions to assist blocks.

St 3 Nothing special here. Not a huge factor as the Ghouls tend to run balls and assist blocks... not often make their own....

Ag 3 Again, nothing special. You'll most likely be using rerolls on the occasional failed pick up. Only dodge when it is tactically wise.... It's amazing how often a 1 or 2 is followed by another 1 or 2....

Av 7 If you are a Ghoul, you've heard all the "thin-skinned" jokes.... Especially after the opposing coach sees how useful they are, Ghouls become a foul opportunity just waiting to happen.... Keep these unarmored skulkers up and moving....

Skills: Ghouls are your only players to start with Dodge. At Ag 3 it is far from a sure thing, but will keep you alive to run away and fight another play! And it is nice for that occasional stunt where you must move (oh, so briefly) into a player's tackle zone and dodge away into an open square.... And, at least, you'll get a reroll when trying to make that spectacular pick up and dodge for the winning touchdown.... (Be discerning, here, you're still Ag 3!)

Skill Advancement: Too many things needed at once! You may find yourself specializing your Ghouls.... First choice for one is definitely Block, while the other might well consider Sure Hands.... Second choices might center around Sure Feet for the Block Ghoul and Kick-off Return for the Sure Hands Ghoul.... Then Sprint and probably Sure Feet. Doubles is nearly wasted... Guard is nice, but you don't want to stick around that long with your weak armor and other duties calling. Pass might work well on the Sure Hands Ghoul, and Mighty Blow on the Block Ghoul... though I think no one will fault you for forgoing the doubles and taking Ag skills.

Stat Increases: Early stat increases can lock you in or change the way you play the Ghouls. Take them all!!! A 4 St, Ma 7, dodging player is just plain scary! Block and Mighty Blow (on doubles) completes this player, but may take him out of the ball-handling role.... Ag 4 compliments the Sure Hands, KoR, Pass (on doubles) Ghoul. Added Ma puts you up there with the Weres, and +Av lowers your fatality rate.... Ghouls benefit from stat increases more than any other player in your lineup.

Recommended Starting Rosters:

With the rescinded price break (LRB6) for the Golems, there are two "Goreman Approved" team rosters...

"The Ghouls ate my Flesh (Golems)"

5x Zombies; 2x Wights; 2x Ghouls; 2x Werewolves. 970k. 3 Rerolls.

"A Stitch in Time, Protects the Sidelines"

5x Zombies; 2x Wights; 2x Golems; 2x Werewolves. 980k. 2 Rerolls.

"Blood Hunt"

5x Zombies; 2x Wights; 1x Ghoul; 2x Golems; 2x Werewolves. 990k. 1 Reroll.

or

3x Zombies; 2x Wights; 2x Ghouls; 2x Golems; 2x Werewolves. 970k. 1 Reroll.

N.B.: The only way to do "Blood Hunt", now, is to go with a near suicidal ONE ReRoll...! Thank the majority of the members of the now defunct Blood Bowl Rules Committee that somehow thought a difference in 20k (costing the Flesh Golems from 110k to 100k) somehow actually took the Necromancer Team from an under-performing 1.5 tier team to a better-than-Wood-Elves performing team! 20k can't do that! Freakin' mathematically challenged IDIOTS!!!

[This would probably be a good time to mention that any outburst of feeble ranting rage is the feelings of the author alone, and not of the host of the playbooks site]