

Dark Elves Tactics - The evil & cruel Druchii will slice everyone to pieces.

Advanced Tactics


By Archeonicus,
Edited by The Mordheimer.
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About the author:

Archeonicus is a living relic when it comes to gaming. Years of knowledge, experience and love for the game have made him a great Mordheim player. While he is the unofficial European Mordheim Champion, he still is a humble avid player. If you visit the Netherlands or play at the EuroGT, feel free to challenge him and take his title home! Many thanks for all his kind words and collaborations!

WebMaster's Note: In my humble opinion, Dark Elves (as well as all other elven warbands) need to be revised. Their stats, while apparently seem to be at par with WHFB and their story lines, are way to high. While compared to mere humans, an average elf may be faster or more skill with the blade or bow, their stats are so high that there is little room to grow. Even among elven warbands their distinction between each other is minimal - for not saying not existing. One of the elven types must be faster than the others, or more skilled with the blade or bow. Differences like this are clearly stated among humans. Reiklanders are stronger; Marienburgers are more skilled at range combat; Middenheimers are plain average but have greater resources so they compensate with higher quality gear; Averlanders are scouts, etc. This overpowering warbands create great conflict on campaigns. Understanding that those who adventure in Mordheim are "wanna-be's", warriors who are starting on their path to glory, one could expect this races to also "mold" closer to average stats.

To balance their incredible stats (like hitting most opponents on 3+, only missing a climb on a natural 6, etc) the designers have reduced their maximum numbers, high jack each unit cost, among other things. While this creates a sense of fairness, on the long run it fails miserably... either crippling the warband terribly or allowing it to become god-like. Hopefully, this warbands would be re-designed in a near future for everyone's enjoyment.

My opinions have created very heated discussions in multiple forums. I do like elven warbands, but they do not seemed quite finished (unlike the Dwarves, who are quite balanced) and someone should attempt to re-design them. Seeing that the Shadow Warriors had been removed from the Official List by Games Workshop, it seemed clear to me that I'm up to something. Please email  [emailyou](#) comments... we want to hear from you!

I. Characters: Knowing the Gang

Highborn This is your leader. Apart from the nice stats of M5, Ld9 and I6 there is that they also have WS5. I know he is expensive, but he is mandatory and can be a great asset especially in HtH. Give him a sword and he will almost always hit on 3+.

Fellblades The champions are the Fellblades. While they only have Ld8 (yeah right) but for the rest are the same as the Highborn. Great fighters! These even have to, because they are not allowed to use missile

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| Beastmaster | <p>weapons. Why that is not that big a deal will be discussed later.</p> <p>What can I say; he is a steal. Starts with only 8 XP (lowest of all heroes) and has the cool whip. Of course he can get and rent some nice doggies, but that is something to be careful about. Especially if you want to use him effectively in a Druchii warband. Though the whips have changed for the Sisters (see FAQ for details) they officially did not amend this one. To be fair would mean be playing to the new rules.</p> |
| Sorceress | <p>She is a bit of a dual sword. While all her spells are useful, though tactics vary accordingly, she is somewhat expensive. Mostly I treat her as a warrior, which can do something extra.</p> |
| Corsairs | <p>These are your henchmen of choice. For a measly 5 gc extra (compared to the other henchmen, the Shades) you get WS4, BS4 and the ability to wear a Sea-Dragon cloak. Although you probably need most of the money for normal members and equipment, they are at least as good as many heroes (a 60 gc Mercenary Captain has only one ability higher (T4) and the rest are equal or lower) of other warbands.</p> |
| Shades | <p>The "cheap henchmen option", cost 5 gc less. In recent discussions it became clear that before editing by fanatic they had BS4 instead of the current BS3, which explains why their cost was set so high, yet nobody revise their cost.</p> |
| Cold One Beasthounds | <p><i>Fear</i> causing doggies... see below.</p> |

II. Starting Tips:

So how would you begin with a warband, what is important to look at when you start?

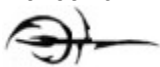
1. If possible buy as much heroes as possible! They are the guys that actually bring in the money, after a battle. The money... I cannot stress that enough! In one-time-only games that fact does not matter, so then there is more room for experimenting.

III. Warband Types:

So now you know something about the characters and about important starter points. Now let's get to the warband designing. Of course there are a lot of options, but often they come down to the following three types of warbands.

A. *The "fluff" warband*

The warband which has a lot of goodies such as Repeating Crossbows and Dark Elf Blades. With starting 500 gc, you can have the following goodies (no pun intended) warband:



Highborn with Dark Elf blade and repeating crossbow



2 Fellblades with Dark Elf blades



Beastmaster with lash and repeating crossbow



Sorceress with Dark Elf blade



2 Corsairs with swords

Possibly you could give the Sorceress a normal sword and lose one repeating crossbow, so you have the cash for one Sea Dragon Cloak. You have 7 members in this warband and shooty does not seem to quite work for a DE warband. So mostly HtH is the way. Therefore the Dark Elf blades instead of repeating crossbows and possibly the cloak is a way to go. No Cold ones because you will often lose someone in HtH. In this small warband everyone must pull their weight and if your Beastmaster is killed you lose too much at once (I saw it happen too often, even to me: I lost him first battle (killed), "luckily" he had no doggies.)

Pro: You have good HtH fighters with clubs that parry and give +1 on the critical!

Con: Only 7 characters (low rout number: 2 models.) Very expensive too; cheapest are the Fellblades/Corsairs. They cost 60/45 equipped.

Strategy: Try to keep the heavy hitters in front. Fellblades and the Highborn, probably the Sorceress too (depends on the spell) together with the Corsairs. Keep the Beastmaster back, he is good in taking out Knock Down and Stunned characters with his lash, and he could use that repeating crossbow. It is to note that until the Beastlash is officially revised it may not even be worth taking the lash at all... If you are heavily outnumbered, try to hit the weaklings in your initial attack, so you have the best chance to take out (KD, St, or Out Of Action) as much as possible to even the odds for next round.

A. *The "maxed out" warband*

With as much elves as possible, with maybe 1 or 2 DE-blades (500 GC).



Highborn with Dark Elf blade



2 Fellblades with axes



Beastmaster with lash (to good)



Sorceress with axe.



5 Corsairs with axes

You start with 10 characters (now why didn't I think of this at the start of the campaign... :-), which are all good fighters!




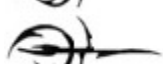


Pro: acceptable number of characters (who are a bit cheaper ;-), which can fight!

Con: No parries.

Strategy: This time you can even out the odds better when in HtH, even against 20 skaven... :-) Caution still is necessary.

A. *The "risky" warband*

This is in fact not as risky as you would think, apart from the fact that you might loose 70 GC after the first couple of battles... (500GC)

-  Highborn with Dark Elf blade
-  2 Fellblades with swords
-  Beastmaster with lash
-  Sorceress with axe
-  3 Corsairs with axes
-  Imperial Assassin (Hired Sword)

Pro: Still 9 characters, one that is awfully good and comes with his own repeating crossbow, Dark Elf blade and poison...

Con: If you do not manage the upkeep of 20 gc you loose an expensive character. This is also the case if he gets killed, which is 1/3rd of the time he goes Out Of Action. Remember he has only one wound.

Strategy: This is HtH with a knack. Most people do not expect a T4 elf that hits with S5.

Range Dark Elves?

Why not go shooty, or start with more repeating crossbow? Well... they are too expensive with 35 GC a pop - although AB gives them if you start for 25... what gives? If you want to have 4 shooters, you loose 100 (140) gc. OK they can shoot twice if they want. But even at BS4, long range and cover will only make you hit at 5+, 6+ if you moved. So you quickly decide for one shot for hitting better. But often you leave some shooters behind, thus weakening you HtH-capability. Only making yourself more vulnerable.

The Doggie Issue

Although Cold one Beasthounds are only 30 gc, they run away if the Beastmaster dies. They have S4, T4 and cause *Fear*, you say. I say they are stupid. They are a good buy, no doubt. But the chance to loose them.

Calculate: You have to loose the Beastmaster to loose the doggies. Let's say you have only one. Beastmaster with lash: 55GC, doggie 30. So it costs you 85 GC only to replace them. You may consider yourself lucky if you have that kind of money. 4 heroes left, means max 24 in the dice, which is only 4 shards (IIRC), which amount you max 70 GC... do the math...

Money is as always the problem with expensive characters... :-)

IV. Dark Elf Magic:

1. Doombolt: A bolt of pure dark energy strikes its target for a S5 hit. 18"R. Armor saves apply. If the target is wounded, the next closest model at -1S than the previous hit. The bolt will keep leaping until there are no more targets or at S1. Each Model can only be hit once per turn and may take a normal armor save. Difficulty (x9) OK, this is the one every one says and they are almost correct, if there was not one spell which is more useful in my eyes. This spell is the ultimate shooter for the sorceress. Not a bad range, sorcery and Mindfocus keep it easy. So no problematic use anywhere... :-)
2. Word of Pain: Victim must pass a Ld test to charge into Hand to Hand. Victim must reroll all successful hand to hand or missile attacks and all to wound rolls. R12". Lasts until next Dark Elf recovery phase. Difficulty (x8) This is one of those nifty little spells, which can help you a lot. It looks a bit like sorcerer's curse of the skaven, but has the added bonus of the Ld-test to charge. That is why the difficulty is 8. This can neutralize the most effective opponent, though mostly HtH characters. Which is of course very nice.
3. Soul Stealer: Sorceress makes a to hit roll against a model in base contact. If successful, the model suffers a wound with no armor save. The sorceress adds one Wound until the end of the battle. Cannot have greater than W+1. Difficulty (x9) The high difficulty makes it a bit hard, but the fact that your sorceress needs to be in BtB contact makes it very traitorous. In HtH orientated warbands that can be good. Just do not fear to loose you characters.
4. Flamesword: One weapon within 6" becomes engulfed in black flames. The weapon strikes with a S+2 and ignores armor saves. Lasts until next Dark Elf shooting Phase. Difficulty (x8) This one I think is a small Gem in these spells, even better than the Doombolt. Your Sorceress can be spared from HtH and yet use it herself and S+2 is nothing to sneeze at, especially for elves. The no armor save is a very small bonus. The difficulty is maybe a bit high, but not inaccessible. :-)
5. Deathspasm: Closest enemy model within 6" must roll on the injury chart. Sorceress is Knocked Down. Difficulty (x10) I can see that this is difficult for Multiwound characters, but Difficulty 10... Not a bad spell at all although very short range and you cannot choose the target. This often means you get easily into HtH, or you will use it on your close combat opponent. Jump up is almost a must for this spell or you only get to use it once.... Because you can only use it in your turn... :-) My sorceress has the spell and Mind Focus skill, which helps, but she used it twice and got taken Out Of Action twice. Not withstanding a lot of countermeasures...
6. Witch Flight: The character may flight up to 12" in any direction. If this move gets her into base-to-base contact she counts as charging. Difficulty (x7) This one has already deserved its merits in other spell lists, so no real explaining necessary. Apart from the fact that a sorceress is WS4/BS4, I6, Ld8, which already makes her a good warrior. So do not be afraid to pick of those lonely snipers, or dangerous characters hiding behind shield troops.

V. Advancing:

1. *Fey Quickness*: The character can avoid melee or missile attacks on a roll of 6. If the model also has Step aside or Dodge, this will increase to a 4+ in the relevant area. This is a nice skill but not a first one you should select. If you already have Step aside (or dodge) then this is very nice indeed. Just think a 4+ unmodifiable save... (Small remark: it says avoiding attacks, but Step aside avoids... wounds.)
2. *Fury of Khaine*: The Dark Elf may make a 4" follow up move if he takes all of his opponents Out Of Action. If he comes into contact with another enemy model this starts a new combat. This new combat takes place in the following turn in which the Dark Elf counts as charging. No following up in the opponent's turn. A see this as the perfect skill for an accomplished fighter, preferably the assassin, or Fellblades with multiple attacks, S4 and Dark Elf blades. So yet again this is not a first choice. Especially the follow up move can be tricky as it can cause you to leave the umbrella of your warband. I mean the protective area, in which members can assist each other. The not following through in the Opponent's turn is somewhat restrictive too.
3. *Infiltration*: The hero is always deployed last, anywhere on the table out of sight of the enemy. If both players can infiltrate, roll a D6 - the lowest sets up first. This is actually not that good a skill for small warbands. Although the skill is good, DE are actually a HtH warband that can shoot too. Thus leaving one fighter out (a hero of all) is not a very smart thing to do. Infiltrators do also have a shorter lifespan as the rest of the warband it seems.
4. *Master of Poisons*: If the Dark Elf doesn't search for rare items after the battle he may make D3-1 doses of Dark Venom. This poison must be used in the next battle and cannot be sold or traded to other warbands as the Dark Elves guard the secret of their poisons very carefully. I must say this is my absolute favourite skill. If you roll 3+ on the D6, then you just earned yourself at least 32 GC. Not to mention some elf that can hit with S+1 on a weapon. My own hero that has the skill for 3 rounds now generated 6 potions up till now... Wow! Especially if you face a lot of T4 opponents.
5. *Powerful Build*: Hero may take Strength Skills. What can I say, if you got a good HtH fighter in development this is nice, but in fact it is an advance wasted. Because it does noting except opening a new skill list. Though it could be handy if some fighter earns two advances and you roll skills for both.

Traditional skills have their merits too of course. Step aside, which works nice with the Fey quickness. Combat master, If you get that Dark venom and you need some extra attacks. For shooting only Eagle eyes and trickshooter spring to mind. Speed skills are actual al very handy, even jump up is more handy then most think. More on that later. Of course lightning reflexes need no explaining. :-)

I will not go to deep into the academic skills, as those are more campaign skills. And that needs testing for every one itself, as people tend do differ a lot which skills are useful. My personal favourites are:

1. *Wyrdstone Hunter*, which might earn you that extra needed shard, or double.
2. *Haggle*, which earns you at least 2 GC and the most 12 GC, every exploration.

Now the special ones, which are really useful for Dark Elves :-)

1. *Strike to Injure*: When using Dark Elf blades this means no more Knockdowns.
2. *Web of Steel*: When using Dark Elf blades this means no more of the lower Critical Wounds, and 2/3rd of a chance to get the worst Critical wound.
3. *Jump Up*: When the sorceress get that nasty spell that makes her Knocked down, this is a must.