

Brettonnia

Questing for the Grail

The Bretonnian team has been a long time in the making, a little over 10 years was spent developing and testing until we had the version we all know and love today - well I love it, hence it is with enthusiasm that I've written a playbook for them.

This is my first playbook, so bear with me if I repeat myself or go off on a tangent.

About me: I have been playing Blood Bowl since the board was made of grey Styrofoam so when I first laid my eyes on the proud knights of Bretonnia it was refreshing to see a team that included two of the new skills in its starting line up. This more than anything is what motivated me to try out the team for myself, and it can have a lasting impact on the skill choices of you and your league mates.

But why should *you* play this team? What does it offer than no other Blood Team can deliver? Well read on and you might get inspired, or you may not, but either way you might pick up a trick or two - whether you utilize them playing your own Bretonnia team or playing against them doesn't really matter, as long as you're having fun maiming and scoring in the name of Nuffle.

This play book will focus on how to play and develop a Bretonnian team in the style I personally prefer to play Blood Bowl. There are properly many other ways to get the most of your Bretonnian team; this is just my view of how do things, and so far its work out rather well.

One of the things that keeps on impressing me about the team is how well the Bretonnians can hold their own, be it facing the mighty Orcs, the wilds of the Chaos or the speed of the Elfs, the team has valid options to counter them. Either with play style or skill choices, that all depends on the preference of the coach playing the team.

Personally when I develop a Bretonnian team I tend to try and build it to counter the stronger slower teams, but that's just me since I dislike getting my team bashed into pieces on the field, I prefer to try and fight back.

Introductions a side, let's have a look at the team roster

BRETONNIA TEAMS

In the fair land of Bretonnia questing for the Blood Bowl trophy is as honourable as questing for the grail itself. Bretonnian nobles and their trusty yeomen hone their skills in the court-leagues, until they are finally ready to quest for the magnificent grail known as the Bloodweiser Trophy.



Qty	Title	Cost	MA	ST	AG	AV	Skills	Talent
0-16	Linemen	40,000	6	3	2	7	Fend	G
0-4	Blitzers	120,000	8	3	3	8	Block, Catch, Dauntless	GS
0-4	Yeomen	70,000	6	3	3	8	Wrestle	GS

Re-roll counter: 60,000 gold pieces each

Star players available for inducement: Dolfar Longstride 150K, Willow Rosebark 150K, Mighty Zug 260K, Zara the Slayer 270K, Griff Oberwald 320K, Morg 430K

As you can see the core of the team are the 4 Blitzers - or as I'll call them from now on the Knights. No knight is complete without a squire hence the team includes 4 Yeomen to handle their knight's amour, tend his horse and other stuff beneath the notice of a Bretonnian nobleman.

Oh yes let's not forget the peasants (Linemen), levied from the appalling all-peasant teams that tarnish Bretonnia's reputation. Persuaded (or forced) into a Blood Bowl kit, they are mostly used for running around the field in a panic creating confusing, thus making it easier for the real players, the knights, to do their job.

Apart from the comical representation of the feudal society of Bretonnia, this team setup has a real synergy that makes it perform well on a Blood Bowl field. Understanding this synergy is one of the keys to succeeding with a Bretonnian team.

For your starting roster, I recommend this line-up:

Qty	Type	Cost
4	Blitzer's (Knights)	480 k
4	Yeomen (Squires)	280 k
3	Linemen (Peasants)	120 k
2	Re-Reroll	120k
0	Fan Factor	0

This will give you a very strong 100 Team Value team. The down side is the zero in fan factor – but that seems to be the norm for new teams – and more importantly lacking an apothecary. Don't lose a Knight until you have hired on an apothecary! This is a risk but one I would personally run, unless of cause you're playing in a league where starting over isn't allowed, or perhaps as a new team in an established league.

As mentioned the first thing you should do is hire an apothecary. Use him on the knights you will want to keep these guys up and running, so to say. Then pick up some more peasants to fill up your ranks and when you get a chance 2 or maybe 3 Re-rerolls more.

I tend to fill up the roster with 16 players, since I don't care much for the Starplayers the team has access to. They have some good once for sure, like Zug, but they don't have that "cheap" star nor a chainsaw and that's a drawback for sure, so I tend to rely on my own players, and if I do need to spend inducements a Wizard or Babes are very handy tools for this team.

What skill combination to use?

Before we can talk about what skills to pick for the team, let's have a look what the team already has, one of the strengths of the team is that it has 4 block players and 4 wrestle players right out of the box, this means you will have to make very few unsafe blocks and you are free to focus your skill choices on other things. The team also has 8 positions with a natural access to strength skills, you should use this to get as much guard as possible early on, allowing you to dominate the weaker teams and in combination with four dauntless players keep up with the strong teams. But let's go through each position, one at a time.

The Knights

MA	ST	AG	AV	Skills
8	3	3	8	Block, Catch, Dauntless

With his stats and skills and access to the general and strength skill category, the Knight is one of the best blitzers players in the entire Blood Bowl universe, and you have not only one but four of them at your disposal. When building your team you will want to max your SPP on these four players, for while they can't carry their team all by themselves, they can come very close. A common mistake is to think of them as catchers, because of their catch skill. They are not! They are Blitzer's who can catch the ball if needed.

This is what your Knights should aim for:

You should construct at least two of your knights as bashers, giving them all the skills they need for this, personally I prefer to build them looking something like this:

One with: Mighty Blow, Piling on, Frenzy, Tackle, Juggernaut

And one with: Mighty Blow, Piling on, Tackle, Guard, Grab

As for the other two, one should have Sure Hands but how they end up looking depends on what stats they get, and how your current league looks.

This is how you should build your Knights:

If the 1st skill is a normal skill, then always pick Mighty Blow.

If the 1st skill is a double skill, pick dodge and of course accept any Stat Increase (MA+ over AV+).

For the 2nd skill, if it's a normal skill and first skill was also normal then you have your first basher Knight! Go for Piling On, following with all the other joyful basher skills as described above. If the first skill was a double or a Stat, this will properly be you Sure Hands Knight.

If the 2nd skill is a double skill or Stat Increase and the first skill was a normal skill, then there is an option to turn this Knight into the Sure Hands Knight on this 3rd skill up.

If the 2nd skill is a double skill or Stat Increase and the first skill was also a double or Stat, then this should in all likelihood become your Sure Hands Knight.

Remember you only need one Sure Hands Knight!!

To sum it up, if you end up with two Knights with basher skills and one Knight with Sure Hands that also has a Stat and or dodge, then you got it right.

The fourth Knight tends to end up as a utility Knight, give him stuff like Guard and Tackle.

The Yeomen

MA	ST	AG	AV	Skills
6	3	3	8	Wrestle

Every good Knight needs a yeoman, so it goes without saying that the Bretonnian team includes four Yeomen to fetch the ball, clear a path for their liege, polish his armour and spit-shine his boots. This is hard work, so beside access to general skills the Yeomen also has access to the strength skill category, and this is what makes them a powerful asset.

There are many ways to build your Yeomen, some coaches favour the idea of turning them into throwers, with easy access to Strong Arm you're only a double away from having a Sure Hands, Strong Arm, Pass player for just 3 skills. Coaches who favour this idea, are properly the considering the Knights as more of a catcher than I do! Or maybe they want all 4 knights in the thick of the fighting – risking putting the ball on a lesser player.

Personally I would only get tempted to make a Yeoman thrower if the first skill was AG+ and the second skill was a double so I could pick pass, then and only then would I be tempted.... maybe.

The primary skill for any Yeoman is Guard. I am tempted to say that your Yeomen only need this one skill. A Yeoman with Guard only adds 90K to the team value, and that is a very good deal. If you have to skill them up beyond the first skill you can go for stuff like Might Blow to buff up the slaying power of your team, I know many prefer Stand Firm and that is for sure an option, I just personally prefer Mighty Blow.

Also it's an idea to have a back up Sure Hand Yeoman, in case your Sure Hands Knight goes down early on in the game, and you would be surprised how often it comes in handy to have a Sure Hands player around in defence. Tackle is also good if you're playing in a dodge heavy league, and on doubles, Dodge is pretty handy. After all, losing a few Yeomen will make the work that much harder on the Knights.

Just keep in mind, Guard first, and then the rest is just fluff.

And this brings us to....

The Peasants

Access to the general skills and with the following Stats,

MA	ST	AG	AV	Skills
6	3	2	7	Fend

Yes I know what you're thinking; the linemen of the Bretonnian team are crap in lack of a better word, and who has ever heard of this Fend skill, sigh... They look like sheep for the slaughter. While this may well be true, your Peasants are a vital part of your team, and when used in the right way, they can be quite handy.

At first glance they sure don't look like much, do they? But don't underestimate them, for a price of 40.000 they are neither slow nor weak. They are however squishy - and don't go getting ideas of any kind of ball handling.

So what good are they? Well first off, if you manage to skill one up, then you have a cheap dirty player, that can add that little extra kick to the head when a Knight fails to send that important Wardancer into the CAS box.

Personally I prefer to pick Block as the first skill. You can then pick Dirty Player or Kick as the second skill. Doubles should go towards adding more Guard to your roster.

Peasants are also one of the few players in the Blood Bowl universe where it's worth considering going for the AV+ on a roll of 10, if it's not a double and he already has block.

So how do you use your Peasants on the field?

The power of your Peasants is in their Fend skill! Isn't fend just for holding back those nasty killing machines with Frenzy and Piling On?! Well yes – but it is a lot more than that.

What you need to know about Fend is that your opponents can't follow up on your Peasants. Well, duh, that's what the skill description says, but what it really means is that if your opponent blocks your Peasant he won't leave the square he is currently in. This gives you a powerful tool in controlling pitch position. A Peasant can pin a player in his place, and you know that if he decides to block your Peasant, he will still be standing in the same spot as last turn, and if the Peasant amour does not break after he is blocked, he will probably be free to move and pin another player. With Fend, you can really jam up your opponents running lanes with his own players! In short: Don't be scared to move them up to your opponents players, worst case you need to go out in the field and "persuade" some other Peasant to take on the bloody uniform.

How to play offence and defence with a Bretonnian team

I consider the Bretonnian team a running team, and a good one at that. Having four players with MA8 and catch will allow you some very fast lane changes and scoring that two turn touchdown isn't all that difficult.

Offence is simple, get the ball on your Sure Hands Knight, take eight turns to grind down your opponents team and then run it in for the Touchdown. This if of cause not always an option, especial not if you're playing against a strong team with lots of guard and basher skills, then this tactic might suddenly result you being down 2-3 players, and if this happens things can start to turn ugly fast.

When playing the strong team, try and use the fact that your team will probably be faster, spread your opponents players out, use fend to keep his lanes blocked, move around and make him chase you. This will get easier with time when you learn to utilize the team in your own way. Always try and play it safe, with a lot of AV7 and AV8 on the field the drive can turn on you very fast, so always try and be in a position where you can go for the touchdown if you need to bring on some reserves.

If this play style is to boring for you or your looking to make a lot of SPP, then just position your knights within reach of the end zone (not hard with MA8) and then go for a handoff to whatever knight isn't in full coverage.

Defence can be a bit trickier, you don't have players that can make spectacular leaps and sack the ball handler or other fancy stuff – and if you're up against a bashy team, you might very well be headed into a stall-grind yourself. So what I like to do is try and spread my opponent thin. Don't be scared to give him a run at the end zone, just apply pressure that either forces him to make a mistake or go for a touchdown, that will either give you a chance to play offence or cause him to make a fumble and you can then recover. Avoid situations where he can just walk it slowly into the end zone in eight turn, so apply pressure around the ball, try and force that critical turnover or the touchdown that will give the ball back into the capable hands of your knights.

Remember! The biggest strength of the team is also its weakness, the Knights. If you're unlucky enough to lose one or two of them early on in the game, it's going to be very tough to hold your own. So always try to protect them early on in the game, and do not go around giving away free blocks on them. AV8 is far too squishy and your Knights are far too important for you to risk a random CAS on them.

As the game goes on you will be able to judge when it's time to commit them into the fray but in the start of the game it's better to have your opponent spending time chasing them down rather than handing out free block.

Overall I think the Bretonnian team is a medium strong team if I was forced to rank it against the other teams out there, I would put it into the lower part of the top 10 teams. I guess it depends on your leagues format, if you have a league with only strong hard hitting teams I doubt the Knights will perform very well, it does not take more than a MISS or two on some Knights before you're in a spiral of bad games. On the other hand, if your league is dominated by fast passing teams, your Knights will shine, since it's one of the best elf hunter teams there is, with MA8 on their basher players, there is nowhere to hide!

The Team plays a lot different than any other team I have tried, and I strongly recommend everyone to try it out for themselves.

This is all I could think of for now, I hope you have a fun time playing with or against the proud Knights of Bretonnia, it's a great addition to the team list, and I hope one day to see it as an official team, because it truly deserves to be just that.

Kind Regards
Niebling