

Dwarves & Bloodbowl

By Stephen Long (Voyagers_uk)

What kind of Card game are you? Are you Blackjack, where the temptation is to HIT and keep on HITTING for the perfect result, forever trusting that the odds are in your favour? Are you Poker, bluffing and full of misdirection, avoiding the cards you have been dealt to play the man opposite you? Are you Rummy, flexible and alert for combinations that will get you where you need to go? Are you Cribbage, on the lookout for the slightest miss-step whereupon you swoop in and score a lot of points....?

Or...Like the Dwarves are you always a variation of the same game.....Patience? A simple array of moves, nothing complex, designed to do two things very well; Firstly to spend time, a lot of it.... And secondly to allow you to become more and more comfortable with the hand you have been dealt. Patience is a virtue that Dwarves possess in Spades!

Dwarves and Bloodbowl. These two words are synonymous with each other and evoke memories of the beginning, the re-discovery of this Game that we love.

Roze-El, the aged Dwarf Seer that helped pave the road that we all tread as we stomp to Glory, he was the first Dwarf to understand. All his relations have helped to Forge the tactics of "Run and Smash" so successfully in the crucible of league play.

Famous Dwarf teams such as the Giants and the Warhammerers both give pointers on where development can lead you, be that grinding violence or flagrantly illegal secret weaponry (this is further enhanced by some Star players available to the team).

By Choosing the vertically challenged route you are steadfastly opening yourself up to accusations of "beardiness", a paucity of interesting tactical know how and the oft repeated phrase (more commonly used with Street-Fighter arcade players) "One-Move". This level of abuse only occurs due to the way a Dwarf team is successful. Stay with me as we explore this Hirsute attitude further.

Basic Team knowledge

Dwarf Lineman – 4 3 2 9 Block, Tackle, Thick Skull (access to General and Strength) for 70,000 gps

Most "line" positions are simple folks (yes Green-skins we mean you!). The wall-fodder, who rock up to practice without much in the way of skill or tactical nous. They tend to be average in every way. This is just not true of Dwarven linemen, or Long beards as they were more commonly known. The length of the facial hair is an indicator of experience and as in most careers, you will pay for experience. At 70,000gps they are the most expensive line position in the game along with some of the Pansy Elf Teams; but you gain a lot of bang for your buck. Block - a pivotal skill

in all measures of combat. Tackle – a skill that by design will keep agility or dodgy teams honest for fear of being hit or falling over. They also possess thick skulls which will keep them on the field for longer. They are not great at moving the ball, as evidenced by the movement of 4 and agility of 2, but do not be dismayed as the strength of 3 coupled with Armour of 9 and the fighting skills mentioned above give you full visibility of what they are going to spend their time doing... fighting!

Given you start with 1 million gps and need at least 11 players it is worth noting that 11 linemen will set you back 770,000 leaving you only 230,000 for upgrades (more on that later)

Dwarf Blitzer – 5 3 3 9 Block, Thick Skull (access to General and Strength) for 80,000 gps

The Increased Movement and Agility of the Blitzers mean these are the born scorers of the team. They remain heavily armoured and ready for a dust up though, should you deem it necessary to get stuck in. Their extra mobility makes them the players who can reset your defence and act as a “Flying Company” to plug holes or breaches.

Dwarf Runner – 6 3 3 8 Sure Hands, Thick Skull (access to General and Passing) for 80,000 gps

The Runners bring unique access to passing skills with them onto the field, thus they become by default your main ball retrieval and dispersal experts. They have the greatest movement on the team and can develop into reliable ball hawks with their sure handed-ness. Their Strength of 3 allows them to Dwarf-Up! Against most teams catchers and runners so they can make vital plays in the backfield.

Troll Slayer – 5 3 2 8 Block, Dauntless, Frenzy, Thick Skull (access to General and Strength) for 90,000 gps

Grumpy, irritable, touchy... These are the terms used to describe the Ginger lunatics on the Dwarf Roster; they bring two unique skills to the table. Frenzy is a great skill for opening holes in the Line or a cage and also for crowd pushes, all of which are useful benefits for a team with limited movement. Next up is Dauntless, which is a massive boon to a team that will have to face a lot of Strength 4 opposition.

Ok...

To look at the basic team selection again

11 linemen @ 70,000 = 770,000gps

This allows 230,000gps for upgrades, bench warmers, rerolls, apothecaries or sideline support.

Most teams require 2-3 rerolls as standard, so given Dwarves may need to go for it to reposition their defence a lot, let's start with 3 for this purpose.

| | | |
|------------|----------|--------------|
| 11 linemen | @ 70,000 | = 770,000gps |
| 3 rerolls | @ 50,000 | = 150,000gps |
| | | = 920,000gps |

Which leaves us 80,000 for upgrades. (Again we will come back to this... please bear with me)

Ball handling should be considered or no matter how many rerolls you have you will fail to win a game. An apothecary could be considered to protect your players but with AV9 you can leave that for a game or two. A fourth reroll would be good. But there is a massive trade off to that.

If you look at the total cost differential between your six positional players and six linemen you get a convenient 80,000gps, so let's say that you save time and buy all the positionals up front and only take 5 linemen. This way you get all the benefits of your linemen for the line and still manage to take all the tactical options provided by your positionals in pairs. You will have no further cash to purchase sundries like a fan-base, but not having to wait for positionals means that will grow quickly

| | | |
|------------|----------|----------------|
| 5 linemen | @ 70,000 | = 350,000gps |
| 3 rerolls | @ 50,000 | = 150,000gps |
| 2 Blitzers | @ 80,000 | = 160,000gps |
| 2 Runners | @ 80,000 | = 160,000gps |
| 2 Slayers | @ 90,000 | = 180,000gps |
| | | = 1,000,000gps |

Skills, Development and Upgrades

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Linemen – | Normal skill choices – | Guard, Mighty Blow, Stand Firm |
| | Doubles skill choices – | Diving Tackle, Dodge, Sure Feet |

The normal skills are the 3 vertebrae in the backbone of the BEARDY skill route and they are what make the Dwarves so hard to play against as they solidify the line and give all around them increased strength.

Realistically doubles skills should be ignored until the 3rd advance at the earliest as they truly are luxuries.

Stat Increases for Linemen are interesting as the only no-brainer is Strength. Agility, movement and Armour have their charms but are not required in a usual team.

| | | |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Blitzers – | Normal skill choices – | Guard, Mighty Blow, Tackle |
| | Doubles skill choices – | Diving Tackle, Dodge, Side Step |

Blitzers take a similar route to linemen, however their greater agility should be leveraged and skills that enhance those “play-maker” tendencies should be taken on doubles.

All Stat increases with the exception of AV should be taken as soon as they appear. Agility in particular makes them into a fantastic safety type player and will allow them to pursue interceptions.

Runners – Normal skill choices – Block, Kick-off Return, Leader
Doubles skill choices – Side Step, Dodge, Guard

Runners are in need of protection, being the only non starting player without Block, but can be easily turned into speciality players. Doubles skills and Stats are Gold for runners, as they either make it easier to get where they need to be or make it even harder to stop them.

Slayers – Normal skill choices – Strip Ball, Mighty Blow, Stand Firm
Doubles skill choices – Sure Feet

Slayers can be drawn out of position so need skills to maximise their destructive side whilst keeping them safe. Sure Feet will help them stay vertical whilst frenzying. Movement and Strength upgrades are very much worth taking.

Death roller – 4 7 1 10 Loner, Break Tackle, Dirty Player, Juggernaut, Mighty Blow, No Hands & Secret Weapon (access to Strength) for 160,000 gps

Of all the rostered players I have left the Death Roller to last due to the controversy he provokes. He is a Secret weapon so will successfully negotiate one drive before he is sent to the wood shed. In most leagues, with most races you will be looking to maintain a trim roster for the sake of inducements and a one drive, slow, non-scoring threat is hard to justify, however I must insist that under the right circumstances a Death Roller is a game changer

Normal rolls – Multiple Block, Guard
Doubles rolls – BLOCK, dodge

Dwarves as a race can take advantage of the fact that they can afford all positionals up front coupled with very low turnover to build massive cash reserves. One way to spend this cash and level the inducement playing field a heck of a lot is to purchase bribes that will keep the Death Roller on the pitch for successive drives or even whole matches.

Tactics

Dwarven tactics are about Damage; both creation and limitation!

Damage Limitation requires strong positioning and an ability not to over-extend. If you rush in thinking that you have them in the grip of your gauntlet, you will find yourself all too easily out of reach and a Touchdown behind.

Damage creation requires simple old fashioned “one dwarf and his dog” methodology. Using well stacked defensive lines you push (or herd) your victims into a bundle where you can exploit your Guard advantage to affect multiple 2 or 3 dice blocks and gradually winnow through the opposition.

X cages; H cages and sideline E cages are all very respected was to stomp downfield grinding the enemy under your steel shod boots and examples can be found online but I will not try to sell you on a fit for your team/league as all are different.

But before you walk out there to crush the pretenders to your 6X. I will caution you once again.

Patience is the Key!