

Infectious Strategies

Is there any wonder that the powers that be (and I am not talking about the Chaos Gods here) have decided that the only Chaos power that is to have their own team is Nurgle? That is because Nurgle is so frikkin' cool!

Ever since my earliest days as a gamer (which goes back to the Days of the Lost and the Damned and Slaves to Darkness book for any other old gits out there) I have had a warm squishy place in my heart for Nurgle. I have always loved the foul, decayed look that presents so many wonderful opportunities for painting and converting. And the great thing about Nurgle, is that even if you are a terrible converter/painter you can hide your mistakes more easily because Nurgle is all about guts and filth, they should not be clean and neat at the best of times!

To my mind the things that make Nurgle so great are the following:

- 1) Conversions
- 2) Mutations
- 3) Able to shut down the agility teams
- 4) Can stymie the bashers

Conversions

The current range of GW product does not have any chaos warriors which are more specifically suited for the Nurgle team, nor do they have a Beast of Nurgle model. But even without proper GW models to represent all the members of the team, the Nurgle coach needs not worry as it is easily resolved. There is a vast range of models and miniature companies out there, so there are many options that they may have for different positions on the team.

One thing that a Nurgle coach should also keep in mind is the fact that the *Nurgle's Rot* attribute allows you to turn the other teams' players into rotters when you kill them. With this in mind I have made several rotters to represent many of the different BB races, with special attention to those that I face in my league.

Mutations

One of the great things about the Nurgle team is that out of the 24 Blood Bowl teams that are available to the coaches, the Nurgle team is one of only five that can have access to the mutations. This opens up whole new possibilities of tactics and team development that other teams can only wish they had!

My personal preference is plastics which are great for cutting and repinning for an infinite range of conversions. The obvious choice of plastics for the Nurgle team are the zombies which make for great rotters, but you can also use models from other races to make rotters to taunt your opponents when you kill one of their players and add them to your own team!

Able to Shut Down Agility Teams

Agility teams rely on scoring quickly to alleviate the pressure of their team get pounded into the dirt and to turn up the score while they still have enough players alive to do so. For these agility teams to score they usually rely on a combination of handing off and passing in order to move the ball from one far end of the field to your endzone. There is no team better than Nurgle to prevent them from doing this, a feat that they accomplish by use of the Tentacles on the Beast of Nurgle and a liberal sprinkling of Disturbing Presence.

One of the great things about this team is the potential to have five players who start with Disturbing Presence which, if properly played, is bound to put a damper on any intended passing game. A cool thing about Disturbing Presence is that it is one of the few skills that you do not even have to be standing to be able to use (can you think of the other two?) The trick is to not over commit the players with Disturbing Presence and allow them flexibility to move to where the throw or hand off will be made or where the catch will be received. It is amazing to see how the coaches of the AG4 players are so spoiled that they will not even want to throw a quick pass when it is only on a 3+! I will make some suggested line-ups for the agility teams to maximize the use of Disturbing Presence.

Can Stymie the Bashers

In order to be successful at Blood bowl you have to roll as few dice as possible, while forcing your opponent to roll more dice than they want to. Not only is the Nurgle team blessed with tons of players with Disturbing Presence, but those same players also have Foul Appearance which can frustrate teams that need to remove players from the pitch in order to increase their hopes of scoring.

Against most bashy teams (i.e. those that do not play a passing game) a standard set up for Nurgle is to put the four warriors on the front line. Their S4 means that most teams are going to get one dice at best against them (without assists) couple this with the fact that there is a 1 in 6 chance of having the block nullified by the Foul Appearance.

A variation of the set up would be when you can expect to be out muscled on the front line. This may be if you are facing a Khemri or Lizardman team or a developed Orc or Chaos team with loads of Guards. In this case, you put three roppers on the front line to take one for the team. Line up the four warriors behind them, and dare the opponent to follow up their players into the TZs of the unscathed warriors. You then have the strength advantage and give them a taste of their own medicine as you beat those players back.

Nurgle Playbook

Every player is going to have their own way of playing a team, and having trolled through enough forums I know that there are a lot of people out there who disagree with the way that I choose to set up the Nurgle team. For sake of completeness I will include some team variations, with a brief word on each, but will go into more depth with the team that I have played extensively and feel, in my own opinion, is the best one.

“Running Game” Team

1 Beast of Nurgle	140K
2 Warriors	220K
3 Pestigors	240K
4 Rotters	160K
3 Re-rolls	210K
3 AC/CL (or 30K Banked)	

Many people swear by the pestigors, and would rather bulk up on these than the warriors. They are the fastest members of the team and with a better agility than the warriors can be relied upon for scoring most of your TDs win the games, right?

But pestigors lack the strength (except on the blitz) which means that many times they will be hit for 2 dice. The beast is great, but you cannot rely on the beast for making the bulk of your attacks. In fact the beast is best when *not* attacking (more on that later)

Including the beast is great, but the beast is only one player. By taking it right away, you are placing too much faith in a player that is unreliable at best. You are also losing out on the spreading of the Disturbing Presence and Foul Appearance that can be utilized to better effect with four warriors than it can be the solitary beast. Not only this but in the development of your team, you are limiting your block and other skill that will be coming to your team early (you will have to wait to buy the warriors and then for them to skill up).

Also without the full four warriors you are losing out on your ability to form a really strong cage with which to protect your ball carrier. This team would rely on rotters making the bulk of the cage or quick passing plays which are going to be higher risk of turnovers and ultimately losing control of the ball.

The nice thing about this team is that all you have to focus on buying is more warriors. Take journeymen for any rotters who die and buy more warriors until you get all four. But also consider then that the warriors take a long time to skill up, so you want to have them ASAP, and by lacking the muscle from the onset you are putting the rest of your team at risk of needing to be replaced.

“The Slow and Steady Team”

4 warriors	440K
1 pestigor	80K
6 rotters	240K
3 RR	210K
3 AC/CL (or 30K Banked)	

I quite like this one and have used it before in league play. The team has a healthy infusion of reliable strength with the four warriors and enough Foul Appearance and Disturbing Presence to upset most teams. The 3 rerolls are nice too as the team is prone to screwing up without their build in rerolls. I feel more comfortable with 3 RR when starting the game.

I would rather have the reliable strength of the four warriors over the beast any day. Too many times has the beast gone stupid leaving me vulnerable or releasing some stray gutter runner he had in his Tentacles. Not only that, but with the Really Stupid, I find that I am having to alter strategies just so I can give the beast a “babysitter” to help him pass his Stupid roll. But having said all that, the beast is so very useful to have on the team, and when it develops, it can become a real nightmare for the other teams. But the beast is likely to be the slowest member of your team to develop, and so the sooner it starts on your team, the better!

Another downside to this team is the lonely pestigor. Pestigors are valuable members of the team to move the ball and act as blitzers and safeties. But with only S3 and AV8, they can be all too easily removed. With only one of the team, you can be sure that your pestigor is going to have a pretty large bullseye painted on him!

“All or Nothing” team

1 Beast of Nurgle	140K
4 Warriors	440K
2 Pestigors	160K
4 Rotters	160K
1 RR	70K
3 AC/CL (or 30K Banked)	

This team gives you the best of the positionals including two of the pestigors. What it lacks is enough rerolls to be really viable. The Nurgle team does not have enough rerolls built into the team and with no block skills means that you are going to be needing more than one reroll to have a decent chance of success.

There is a band-aid solution that I prefer which leads me to ...

My Preferred Starting Roster

1 Beast of Nurgle	140K
4 Warriors	440K
1 Pestigors	80K
5 Rotters	200K
2 RR	140K

This is a variation on the “All or Nothing” team roster. By exchanging a pestigor for another rotter and using up the banked funds, you are able to capitalize on all of the positionals. The Nurgle team needs to play to it’s strengths which are it’s strong warriors, the beast and the ability to shut down block and passing plays.

The team starts with fewer rerolls than I would normally like, but on a doubles roll for any of the rotters, I would take Leader until I am able to buy more. Doubles on any of the other players has more valuable choices (see *Skilling Up Your Players* below).

Having only one pestigor leaves the problem mentioned before, that he is going to be a target for the opponents’ teams. There is no getting around this, and even when you have more than one, they will *all* be targets. So get used to it! The important thing to remember, is that given that they are the best choice for ball carriers, they will be the ones who will skill up most easily (quick passes and TDs), so they are really the best choice for buying later as they will not take as long to gain those SPPs and skills.

Skilling Up Your Players

The following shows what skills are best taken by each of the positions on the team along with which stat increases you should take and which you should ignore. The skills are listed in order that they are best taken. In the case where a regular skill is in bold, is because it should be taken before any of the doubles rolls.

Bashy Nurgle Warrior:

Regular: **Block**, (Mighty Blow then Claw) or Guard, Stand Firm

Doubles: Dodge, Leader

Stats: MA/Av - Yes (Either), Strength - Oh baby yes! Agility - Other skills may be more useful

Anti-Dodgy Nurgle Warrior:

Regular: **Block**, Tentacles, Tackle, Mighty Blow, Break Tackle

Doubles: Dodge, Leader

Stats: MA/Av - Yes (Movement more than Armour), Strength - Always good! (Go for tentacles after and you have another beast of Nurgle!) Agility - Other skills may be more useful.

Ball Mover Pestigor (definitely the first and the most common on the team)

Regular: **Extra Arms**, Block, Big Hand, Two Heads, Kick Off Return

Doubles: Dodge, Pass, Accurate, Jump Up, Sure Feet, Sprint

Stats: MA/AV - Yes (Either are useful), Strength - Yes! Agility - Yes!

Safety Pestigor (you should only need one of these on the team, unless you are in a very high agility league)

Regular: **Wrestle**, Strip Ball, Frenzy, Tackle, Extra Arms (to get the ball back in your control, after you knocked the ball carrier down, if no one else is available)

Doubles: Dodge, Diving Tackle, Jump Up

Stats: MA/AV - Yes (Either are useful), Strength - Yes! Agility - Yes

Rotters on the line

Regular: **Block**, Fend, Dauntless

Doubles: Guard, Dodge, Thick Skull

Stats: MA/AV - Yes (Armour is more useful), Strength - Yes! Agility - Yes

Rotters in the Field

Regular: **Kick (only one needs this)**, **Block**, Extra Arms or Claw

Doubles: Dodge, Mighty Blow, Guard, Thick Skull

Stats: MA/AV - Yes (Either are useful), Strength – Yes, Agility - Yes

The Beast!

Regular: **Break Tackle, Stand Firm** (which one you takes first depends on whether you expect people to try to hit your Beast, or sacrifice a player and put the Beast into a TZ), Guard, Grab, Thick Skull

Doubles: **Block**, Dodge, Prehensile Tail, Pro

Stats: MA/AV - Yes (Movement is more useful), Strength – Yes, Agility - No

Offensive setup (standard) - *this will be done without the Beast - Beast will come later*
-Setting up the cage

Defensive Setup - *this will be done without the Beast - Beast will come later*

-vs bashy

-vs agility

Beast

-use in setups (offensive/defensive)

- how to get the most out of it

-how NOT to use it

On the defense keep the Beast off the front line - keep it somewhere near the back with a babysitter and then pounce on one of the GRs as they move into a scoring position. Keep the warriors spread out on the front line to ensure that their disturbing presence makes it less likely that he will be attempting any passes or hand offs. Disturbing Presence is going to be a huge thing for you - make sure that you try to ensure that your warriors are all over the pitch to disrupt the skaven passing plays.

By keeping your warriors spread out in this manner you will be reducing the chances that he will be making any moves with his 1-turn scorer as it will mean that he will have to be on the line of "screamage", and consequently in the zone of one or more warriors. He may try to set this up on a later turn so watch out for it.

When the GRs bust through (and they will) get a beast onto one (or more if you are lucky) and then just SIT THERE. DO NOT try to block them with the beast for fear that it will go stupid and then it's tentacles will be of no use. Block with other players (if you can keep the GRs in the beast's tackle zones - certainly not something to do if the GRs have Side Step!)

On offense, hold the warriors off the front line and make them the posts of your cage. move up slowly and methodically, pounding as you go. Use the Beast as little as possible - more in the duty of holding players with his tentacles than trying to inflict any real damage.

One thing to consider is that if you win the coin toss - kick to him. You [i]want[/i] him to score quickly (well you don't want him to score at all, but let's be realistic - properly played skaven can be almost impossible to stop!). He should score on the second or third turn. You then take the whole rest of the half to move up slowly, pound the snot out of him and then score on the last turn. He then kicks again to you in the second half and you move up slowly again taking the whole half to score which should leave you at 2-1 your favour with him only having one turn to score. Ideally his one-turn scorer should be out of the game by this time, but if not - you know what his play will be and just ensure that you are getting the DP as

widespread as possible, and make him dodge many times before he can reach the Endzone.

Hope this helps.