

Elf, A primer

(This was written originally on Notepad, copy and pasted to Word and then converted to a PDF. If there are any spelling or grammatical errors I did not catch I apologize in advance)

This guide is written for coaches who want to play Elves, but want to avoid the pitfalls that I have experienced in playing Elves.

Why should I play Elves?

Elves are a mechanically strong team with one of if not the strongest starting offense in the game. They are one of the few teams where passing is as reliable as running and over the long run may be the "better" option. The Elves have two great positional in the blitzers and the Catchers, the other positional while not amazing, are very cheap for what you get. The Elf defense while initially challenging, can become very dynamic and a lot of fun to play.

The Elves do supply many coaching challenges such as low overall team armor, no regular access to strength skills, and a tendency to bloat in team value.

Coaches looking to play a top-flight agility team with a little more challenge than wood elves, or those who really like the idea of passing should look no further than the Elves.

The Team

(0-2) Elf Blitzer \$110,000 Ma 7 Str 3 Ag 4 Av 8 Starting Skills: Block, Side Step Skill Chart: Normal General, Agility; Doubles: Strength, Passing

The Elf Blitzer is a great piece that has the advantage of being in the shadow of the War Dancer. Many coaches like to "headhunt" for the War Dancer due to their great set of skills and low AV. While I would not say the Elf Blitzer is as good as the War Dancer it can also be a menace on the field. The Elf Blitzer shares the same stat line as the Dark Elf and High Elf Blitzers, but has the important addition of Side Step. This skill makes them a headache for opposing teams especially with other easily obtainable skills. Because your team won't really be able to stand toe to toe with many other teams and the lack of strength access, this player is not an ideal killer. This player would be the most likely candidate for that role, but the lack of easy access to killer skills will make development tough. There are other players on the team who with development will become better ball hunters so this player's role is different than that of most blitzers.

This player works best as a safety/marker and as an escort/"Vanguard". As a safety the early combination of Block and Side Step makes it very hard for new teams to move the player off of the ball carrier. Since the Blitzer can easily obtain the Diving Tackle skill it makes them potentially very dangerous to dodge away from. The Blitzer has good speed making it easy to chase down opposing players.

As an escort the Blitzer is a good companion for protecting your catchers downfield waiting for a pass. Since they start with Block they are harder to take down than a rookie Catcher and the Side Step allows you to stay in contact with your charge. Since they also have the highest armor on the team they would be the best candidate for basing a cage. This is not recommended, as 8 AV is hardly invincible and doesn't fit well into the Elves play style, but sometimes you need to.

Blitzer Progression
"Safety"

Normal: Dodge, Tackle/Diving Tackle, Jump Up, Fend/Sure Feet

Doubles: Guard, Nerves of Steel

Stat increases: All (even AV should be considered later in development)

The Safety is focused on staying close to his quarry, and preventing escape. Because he needs to keep tackle zones on the target he needs to remain upright. Dodge helps to prevent a knockdown and sidestep will negate the ability to push the player away from the target. Then to make sure it's hard to get away a combo of Diving Tackle/Tackle will prevent all but the most desperate from dodging away. In dodge or agility heavy leagues you may want to take tackle first as Diving Tackle is less effective against higher agility players and those with dodge may simply re-roll out leaving your player on the ground with no advantage gained. After that because you might find yourself on the ground often, you may want to take Jump Up to stay more mobile. Finally Fend will help with staying upright and avoiding killers and Sure Feet will allow for more reliable extra movement without the cost of a move boost.

Because the team doesn't have any players over three strength naturally Guard is a very valuable way to prevent stronger teams from overpowering and killing your players, this skill improves the overall teams as strength is hard to come by. Nerves of Steel can be useful as that player may have more frequent chances at scattered balls and interceptions. Because this player will be frequently alone, a later boost to the armor maybe very beneficial as the players armor may be checked more often than their 8 AV should be.

"Vanguard"

Normal: Dodge, Dauntless, Tackle, Frenzy, Fend, Jump up

Double: Guard, Juggernaut

Stats: Str, AV

In this build the focus is on protecting other players on your team and removing obstacles for your offensive a defensive specialist. Vanguards should protect themselves with dodge to ensure they will be a more active force on the field. The remaining skill order will depend largely on what opponents you are facing. Dauntless maybe helpful earlier if

you face teams with higher strength players frequently. Tackle is useful for bringing down those in your way if there is a lot of dodge. Frenzy can help in clipping the corners off cages allowing for more pressure to be applied to the ball carrier. It can also be used to clear holes for the ball carrier to shoot through. Fend late will help defend from killers, and Jump Up will help you maintain your effectiveness and throw surprise blocks. As stated in the previous build Guard on any player is a god send and should not be passed up lightly. If one is so lucky to get two double skills Juggernaut will help with field control, moving Stand Firm, Fend, and Wrestle players and turning the block into the sometimes more desirable push.

Since this player is more hit focused, Agility boosts may not be as worthwhile as regular skills. Since the player will often be in contact with other players the Armor may help more than extra movement.

"Killer"

Since this build relies on taking Might Blow on a Double rather than the more useful Guard, that's really the only difference between the killer and the Vanguard. Jump Up and Tackle will be useful and on a second double Piling On. Depending on how much you want to attempt to bash, you may find this a useful build, however hitting in not the Elves strong suit and you may only find limited success.

(0-4) Elf Catcher \$100,000 Ma 8 Str 3 Ag 4 AV 7
Starting Skills: Catch, Nerves of Steel

Chart

Normal: General, Agility

Double: Passing, Strength

The Elf Catcher is the best catcher in Blood Bowl. They are stronger than the Human and Wood Elf Catcher; they have a superb double skill as a starting skill which makes them out the gate better than the High Elf Catcher. Since they are offensively very strong starting they really do not need to focus on gaining more offensive skills and should focus on protecting themselves and helping with team defense. Since they do not start with Block they make a great candidate for blodge hunters and cage crackers. They can develop into many alternate rolls while still staying strong offensively. There are three paths that are very successful for Elf Catchers, the "island", the "cage cracker", and the "safety".

Elf Catcher Progression

The Island

Normal: Dodge/Block, Side Step, Fend, Leap/Diving Tackle/Jump up

Double: Guard

Stat Increase: Str, Ma, Ag

The island is a player who can be left out in the open to spread out the defense and allow for other players to receive the ball or survive a hit and get the score on the next turn. The Blodge combination is obvious to increase the likelihood that the player will remain standing. Side Step allows the player to keep in good position and can allow for occasional side line running. Fend will allow the player to maintain space as well as killer protection. After those skills the player can be tailored to other players on your team. Leap can allow the player to get out of tight spots or if you were lucky enough to have guard as well allow for assist in a cage. Diving Tackle allows this player to be a surprise threat or create an impassable territory for opposing players when used in tandem with other diving tacklers. Jump Up preserves movement and allows for surprise blocks and TDs. Guard is a great skill and should be taken any time you get a chance to take it. You might think that Dump Off would be ideal, but I wouldn't take it on these players. I will talk about Dump Off in detail at the end of this section.

Cage Cracker

Normal: Wrestle/Leap, Strip Ball/Tackle, Dodge, Jump Up

Double: Guard, Mighty Blow

Stat Increases: Str, Ag, Ma

This player will be valuable in your fight against cages, with a little luck and good planning will become a very reliable method of attack. I choose to do this with a Catcher rather than a Blitzler or a Lineman for these reasons. In comparison with the Blitzler the Catcher position is more abundant 4 opposed to 2 allowing you to specialize one for still leaving 3 catchers to primarily be ball handlers or other defensive specialist. Also, the Blitzlers start with Block which makes adding Wrestle a bit redundant. Compared to the Lineman, the 8 move of the Catcher with no stat downside comparatively makes them better able to attack from "unexpected" areas and also provides a potential for escape. The choice between Leap first or Wrestle is purely personal. I wouldn't attempt breaking cages without both skills. The Leap skill has some great offensive potential so I would be inclined to take that first. After that the second split is between Strip Ball and Tackle. If the league is light on sure hands, then Strip Ball will be the better option as a Blodger without Sure Hands is still a jerk without the ball even if he remains standing. If the league has a lot of sure hands ball carriers then Tackle is a better choice and if it's a very popular skill choice then Strip Ball can be cut from the progression. The final two skills are bonus, the first 4 skills are the important ones and these are merely icing on the cake. Dodge is useful if you are trying to extract your player from the cage after he hits the ball handler. Jump Up is nice if you wrestle the ball carrier down, or if you are felled by a knockdown or bad leap. As far as doubles go, the skill Guard is always a useful skill, on this player I would probably pass on it unless the four skill progression was done. Mighty Blow could be useful since this player is most likely to hit another player, but I wouldn't

take it earlier than a 4th skill. Strength and Agility boosts are so useful feel free to take them anywhere in the progression. If by chance you were able to get both, that becomes a little tricky as a player does need quite a few skills to be very effective in this role.

Safety

Normal: Block, Shadowing, Tackle, Diving Tackle, Dodge, Side Step

Double: Guard

Stat Increases: Ma

This type of safety is a little different than the Blitz version. A team could easily pass on this player progression and be just fine. I found that even though my version of the player did not start out with the same progression he struck fear in to the hearts of opponents. Block is the first skill in the progression because it is one of the most consistently useful defensive skills. It helps the safety from just being blocked off each time. Shadowing is what makes this player so dangerous since he has the speed that makes shadowing dangerous. The most common movement speed in the game is 6. This player would need to roll an 8 or better to escape from an equal speed shadower. The 6 mover would need to roll a 10+ to escape an 8 moving shadower, and each time they move there is another dodge that has to be made. This will either stop an opponent in their tracks or cause them to make a lot of risky moves. Combine this with Diving Tackle which is checked before the shadowing check, you can choose when to devastate your opponent and when to keep following. Even though the awesomeness of Shadowing/Diving Tackle was just discussed Diving Tackle can be burned by Dodge, and those that are going to make the attempt to move away from this player will probably have Dodge. Eliminating that makes it harder to get away from the shadowing player and even more effective when Diving Tackle is taken after. The next two skills are there just to make the player harder to knockdown or push away.

Guard doesn't necessarily help with the build, but is a very useful skill so if you want to take a double skill take that one. A movement boost will make the shadowing even more devastating. Instead of a 10+ now 6 movers need an 11+ and 4 moving players cannot escape.

I haven't included an offensive focused player since this player starts with everything they need to easily get down the field and score. If you were going to add more offensive potential you could grab the Sure Feet/Sprint combo to make the player an even faster mover. Since the catchers already catch everything on a 2+ you really won't need Diving Catch. If you play in a league with a ridiculous amount of Disturbing Presence then it might be more useful. Developed Elf throwers will either one out and fumble or it will be an accurate pass.

When looking at these Catchers people often think that Dump-Off would be an awesome combo. The players already have Nerves of Steel so it will always (unless you're playing Nurgle) be a 2+ pass, and most of your targets will catch on a 2+ as well. There is a daydream that you will have all of these Dump-Off catchers and that you can magically score a touchdown by getting hit four times and dumping it off to victory. One, even a rookie coach could see the set up for this coming and would play set up to make the play

tough to accomplish. Two, in order for it to be successful you would be inviting blocks on your players. In most cases it is advantageous for you to score in two turns as it allows you to control the hits against your team. The longer you are on the field the more chances your opponent has to hammer your low armor. It's a fun thought experiment and you might be able to make the greatest team ever using that strategy, but you would be in the minority, not the majority.

(0-2) Elf Thrower \$70,000 Ma 6 Str 3 Ag 4 AV 7
Starting Skills: Pass

Chart

Normal: General, Agility, Passing

Double: Strength

The Elf Thrower might be the least impressive Elven race thrower in the game. He's slower than the Wood Elf and Dark Elf throwers. And the High Elf thrower starts with Pass and Safe Throw. What he lacks in advantage he makes up in cost. He is very cheap. Because the player is still an Elf, he will be able to fill his role in an acceptable manner. I feel there are two paths for throwers on the team and because they are very inexpensive I suggest having two. I divide them into two groups, the pure passer, and the utility player. An individual player develops based on if he rolls a double skill as his first skill. If the player rolls a double or an agility boost, then he becomes the pure passer. If his first skill is not an agility boost or a double skill, he becomes the utility player.

Utility

Normal: Kick, Leader, Block/Kick-Off Return, ETC

Double: Guard

Stat Increases All or None

The utility player is a pure team player. His role is to take all of the total team effecting skills rather than focus on the individual. So the first choice is kick, which is usually relegated to a lineman, but I feel that the linemen are too "valuable" to put kick on them. The Thrower is only 10k more than a lineman, has the pass skill and passing access on normal rolls. This player is more likely to be playing off the line of scrimmage allowing them to use kick. The second skill that I would take is Leader. It allows for a marginally cheaper re-roll that cannot be effected by the Master Chef. This team can bloat in value and later on every little but counts. After those skills if you want to make starting your drive a little smoother take Kick-Off Return, if you need a little more defense take Block. After that if you want to skill this player any further the rest of the choices are yours, I would avoid giving them more skills to avoid bloat. Guard is always useful, and if you are going to take more than Kick and Leader, Guard is always a good one. With Stat increases it's up to your personal preference. I would pass on them once the player is established as Utility player, but I wouldn't laugh at someone for taking a boost.

Pure Passer

Normal: Accurate, Safe Throw/Block/Sure Hands/Kick-Off Return

Double: Strong Arm

Stat Increase: Agi, Ma

This player will be used to move the ball downfield quickly and protecting the ball by staying deep in the backfield. If this player rolled doubles or an Agility increase on their first roll, they are already halfway done. They would need accurate after that, and then you can add whatever other skills you would like. If you play a pass heavy game you might want to take Safe Throw as the more you throw the higher the chance that an interception will happen. The other skills listed can be handy depending on how you want to finish after you have Accurate and the double or the boost. If you don't get either by your third or fourth skill, you may want to consider cutting and re-buying to try again. Again this player becomes most effective after 3 or 4 skills, so you may want to avoid getting unnecessary SSP with this player as they still need to drive the offense. There is no reason you can't try to hit legendary, but the player might not be worth the cost at that point.

The Runner

Normal: Nerves of Steel, Dump-Off, Sure Feet/Block/Dodge/Sure Hands

Double: None

Stat increases: Ma, Str

I don't feel that this team would make for a strong running team. Most of the players are too slow and the team is much better at passing the ball. However, if you want to make sort of an "option" style offense you could build the passer to be a ball carrier that takes advantage of 4 catchers with Nerves of Steel. Since I have never ran this style of offense I really can comment on how effective it is, but it might be fun.

(0-16) Elf Lineman \$60,000 Ma 6 Str 3 Ag 4 AV 7

Starting Skills:

Normal: General, Agility

Double: Passing, Strength

The Elf lineman has the most thankless job on the team, taking the hits from the other team. Because they have low armor and will be the player that are set up to take blocks, Lineman have low career expectations and should not be counted on for very longer

because of this you want to make sure that the skills that you do give them effect the most things possible. If you want to focus on making a lineman into a one of the specialized role that was suggested for other players on the team, by all means do so. Outside of the Thrower, the Lineman have the same skill access as the Blitzzer and Catcher, the inferior stats and starting skills of the lineman do not make this ideal, but in the case of dead players and cash flow problems Lineman may have to take on those roles.

Basic Lineman

Normal: Fend, Wrestle/Dodge/Side Step

Double: Guard

Stat Increases Str

FEND? FEND! Fend is an atypical first choice skill and with many other teams I would recommend it second or third. However, through playing this team I found that the linemen are far more likely to die or suffer serious injuries that lead to early retirement. Because of this, we need a skill that has maximum use with little drawback. Block is a great skill that allows you to withstand the Both Down result and remain standing. But it only affects the Both Down Result and likely the opponent is throwing two die blocks at you making it the only or desired result less likely. Apply this same logic to Wrestle and Dodge. (Dodge fairs even worse) So what you need to expect with your lineman is to lose the battle up front. So this brings us to Fend, it prevents the attacker from following up with his Block and thus stalling the forward momentum of the player. This isn't a big advantage over faster teams, but they aren't as much of a threat. The slow bash teams however really need every step forward they can get. This will stop at least three players from advancing hopefully helping to stop a cage from moving or even forming. This skill also helps the opposing team's killers from Piling On your lineman maybe preventing an early death. What makes this skill a great first choice is that it affects 4 of the six possible outcomes on the Blocking dice. One of those, the attacker is stopped in place anyway and on the other the attacker is the one going down. This is why I feel that Fend is the best first skill for an Elf lineman. Taking Wrestle, Block, Dodge, or Side Step after that is simply preference. I prefer Wrestle to Block as laying down a potentially slower opponent is in your favor. As stated on every other Elf player Guard is a good skill and I would take it over Fend if it came up first. A Strength boost is also awesome and that would be a fine first choice as well.

Starting Builds at \$1,000,000

Standard Build

2 Elf Blitzers 220,000k

2 Elf Catchers 200,000k

1 Elf Thrower 70,000k

6 Elf Linemen 360,000k
3 Team Re-Roll 150,000k
Total: \$1,000,000

This was my starting build and is the most widely used Elf team starting roster. It gives you access to all the positional as well as 3 Team Re-Rolls.

Alternative Builds

Heavy Thrower

1 Elf Blitzzer
3 Elf Catchers
2 Elf Throwers
5 Elf Linemen
3 Team Re-Roll
Total: \$1,000,000

This is an alternative build for those that want a near standard build but want to build both Throwers more quickly.

No Blitzzer

4 Elf Catchers
1 Elf Thrower
6 Elf Linemen
3 Team Re-Roll
Total: \$980,000

This build maybe useful who play in a bash light league and want to have the most scoring potential at the start.

No Catcher

2 Elf Blitzzers
1 Elf Thrower
8 Elf Linemen
3 Team Re-Rolls
1 Apothecary
Total: 970,000

This build might be useful for those who want to avoid the Catchers taking all of the SSP and stifling Lineman development, but can't resist the temptation.... yeah.

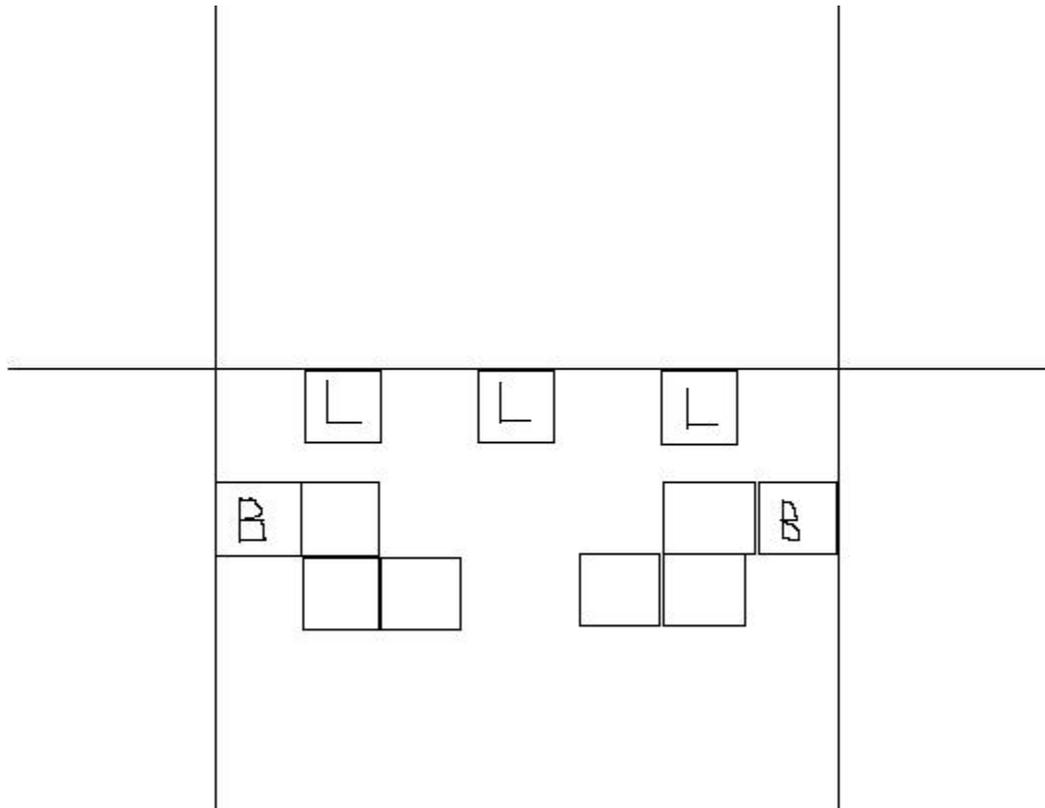
All of the above builds have three re-rolls. A team could drop a re-roll if they want to add another catcher or an Apothecary if they really felt it was necessary. I feel that three re-

rolls is a good number and it's better to buy them before the cost goes up. If you are a consistently lucky individual by all means pass on the re-roll. However, I think that 3 re-rolls and a Leader later on is the ideal.

ELF Strategy

In Blood Bowl teams that play to their strengths generally have a better go of it than those who play in an atypical fashion. The Elves have a very strong offense and should play to score as much as possible. Getting up on a team early can be to your advantage as the other team will be forced to score in less than a full 8 turns. Many teams rely on a quick score from the opposing team and then seek to gain a man advantage and grind the rest of the game from there. This means that in order for you to beat these teams, you must limit the number of blocks your team receives and capitalize on the mistakes your opponent makes. This is much easier said than done, but it is not impossible. Against faster teams that are looking to score as often as you are, you do have advantages that they do not, primarily "unmarkable" 3 strength catchers. In these cases I would still recommend scoring often, but against these non-bash teams you may be able to play the clock a little more than against the bashy teams.

Here is a common set up against bashy teams (I apologize for the terrible quality)

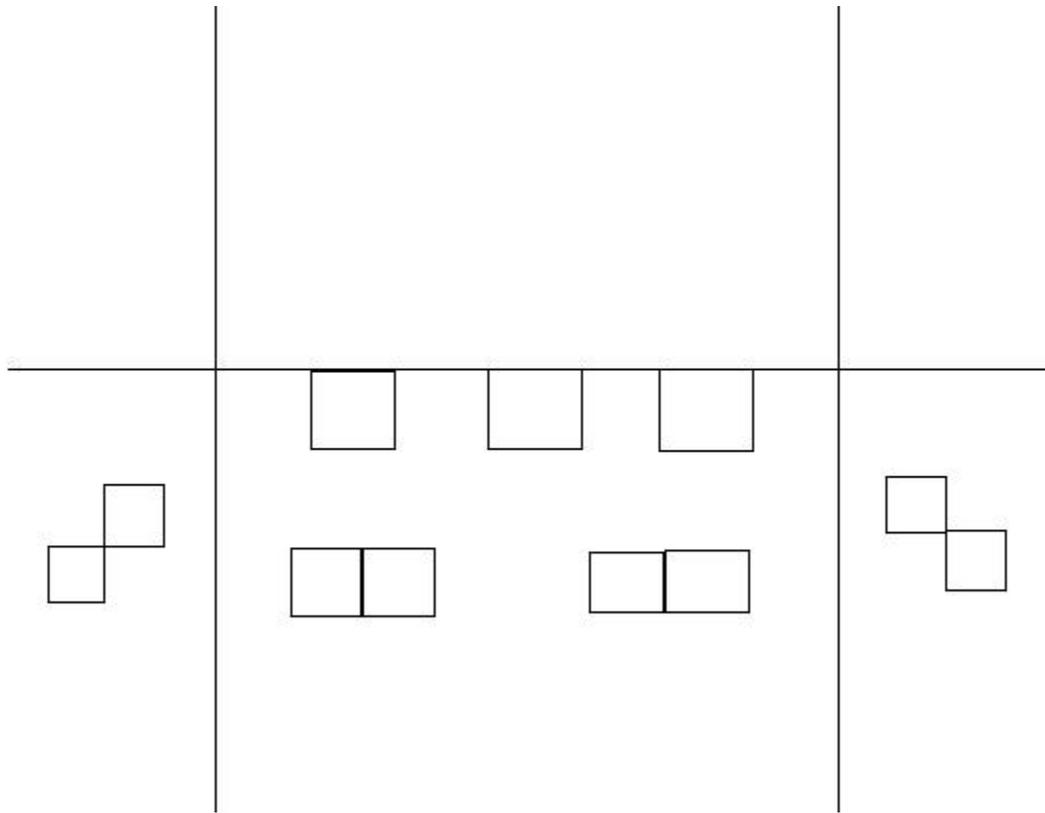


This set up limits the number of blockable players to 4. Your three scrimmage lineman and one player in the backfield. This initial push is the most dangerous to your team as you are not able to control the blocks thrown against you. The linemen are at the mercy of the opposing team. I keep them one space apart as that prevents free movement into your backfield from the middle of the field and clustering just plays into their strengths. The second rank plays in pairs near the widezone. This is to help against those who are Blitzing into the backfield. Typically the Blitzers will go on the edge as they are more likely to survive a hit, and then can direct their movement afterward. Early on, you may want to pair a Lineman with the Blitzer, and later in development a defensively developed Catcher. Typically, you can play this one space off of your front line, as you should be safe from chain pushes getting into your backfield. The next set of players are lined up off of the inside player in the first pair towards the center of the pitch. This is where you would keep your rookie catchers and throwers and latter the more offensive or less developed throwers and catchers. This creates a strong presence in the middle of the pitch that will hopefully encourage the slow bash defense to move to the outside. This is your intended goal. If they continue to press the middle you will need to back up and start phase two of the defensive set up. If you have an opportunity to strike before the cage forms, take it. Even if it doesn't result in getting possession of the ball, having the ball on the ground or in the possession of the wrong player can be just as good. Assuming the cage has formed you then move into phase two.

In the second phase of the defense you are looking to control the movement of their cage and wait for opportunities to strike. If at all possible you want to limit the amount of blocks the opponent can throw to one, their Blitz action. Only base other players if it is necessary or if you have no other option. Dodging away from opponents is usually a better idea as it's a pretty high percentage roll for you and they can't Mighty Blow and Piling On if you get knocked down. Save these for the final actions of your turn. During phase two your defensive set up will change to this.

Use this to limit the movement of the cage and try to direct them towards the sidelines. If you have a cage cracker, you can attempt to cut the corners of the cage and then leap in to hit the ball carrier. Use common sense on this though. If the ball carrier is blodge sure hands and is of equal or greater strength and you have leap and nothing else this is not going to go well. If you don't have the ability to crack the cage, you will need to apply pressure to the ball carrier. Blitz off the corner of the cage and then mark the ball carrier. Early on the best markers will be the blitzers and will probably remain that way throughout development. Then you need to try and limit assists and wait for an opportunity to hit the ball carrier or force an error. I would try and leave a player out of the action that can take advantage of a pass and burn towards the end zone.

Against fast teams the prior formation can still be used, but you may want to put a player in the widezone as these teams can make much better use of them. This is an expanded version of the previous set up.



In the previous set up the wide zones were ignored. This is because you were more than likely able to catch up to a Dwarf Runner streaking down for a pass. Because this defense is against faster teams who you might not be able to catch staying the wide zone allows you to impede progress and catch those who get by. If you see the opponent setting up in multiple pockets behind you it likely will lead to a pass, in this case you want to mark up the receivers as best as you can and prepare for a throw. Marking with your Catchers between the receivers and the thrower can be quite advantageous. Since you will have Nerves and they in most cases will not it makes it harder for them to catch the pass, but you will not suffer the same penalty when attempting an interception. Your Catchers will need a 5+ with a re-roll, those are rather reasonable odds (for blood bowl anyway) for intercepting a pass.

If you see the opponent setting up a wall on either sideline, engage the wall and try to get players at the end of their wall to cut it off. Because fast teams can pull a reverse, do keep a few players off to prevent this. If the opponent attempts to cage, use the anti-bash strategy, but you can be a little more aggressive with base to base contact.

The defensive strategies discussed above only deal with stereotypes of play styles. Individual coaches you will face will have different ways of playing. Adjust accordingly. If you are facing a Wood Elf team and they are leading casualties in a bash heavy league **BACK OFF!**

On offense your passing game will become your strongest weapon. Since you are setting up against the defense there isn't a standard formation that will work against all defensive set up. The general idea is to spread out as many receivers as possible and avoid base to base contact with the opponent. This should allow your thrower multiple targets to throw to, the opponent will attempt to Blitz what they consider to be the most dangerous threat. Use your Blitzers and Linemen to protect undeveloped Catchers and those with fewer defensive skills. Don't worry about being marked they can't stop you from catching the ball. Next turn chuck it to the best option and then blitz away any difficult markers (those with Diving Tackle and like skills) or dart away for the score. I never had much success running the ball. There are other Elf racial running strategies that you could work into your game.

The Elf team is a very fun team to play. You will make other jealous of your ability to score on command and if played correctly you won't have to sit at the top of the casualties allowed category. As any guide this is not the end all be all of Elf guides if you have developed a different style it is no way inferior to this one. This style has been very effective for me and should allow other to find success as well. Thanks for reading!