

5.0 TOURNAMENTS (v1.6)

For a short period following the collapse of the NAF there were no tournaments or competitions at all. Teams simply played ‘one-off’ games for whatever prize money they could get. It was not long, however, before the Cabalvision networks and major Blood Bowl sponsors got together and started arranging tournaments with large prizes for the teams that managed to battle their way through to the final. Four tournaments quickly established themselves as the most important and eagerly anticipated Blood Bowl events of the year, and were soon being referred to as the ‘Major Tournaments’ or simply the ‘Majors’. These tournaments were the Chaos Cup, the Dungeonbowl, the Spike! Magazine Trophy tournament, and, of course, the Blood Bowl itself.

The Majors are held at roughly three-monthly intervals over the year. Each of these periods is known as a ‘season, as the Chaos Cup is held in the spring, the Blood Bowl tournament is held in the summer, and then the Spike! Magazine tournament is held in the autumn. The Dungeonbowl is held during the dark winter months, when most teams appreciate playing in nice warm underground stadiums rather than out in the freezing cold. There are exceptions of course – most Norse teams actually prefer sub-zero conditions, while the Ice Lord team of Frost Giants can’t take part in the Dungeonbowl tournament at all because they would melt in the warm underground stadium!

At the end of the season teams gather to decide who wins the trophy. Each tournament is held at a different location. The Blood Bowl is held at the huge Emperor stadium at Altdorf, and the Spike! Magazine tournament in the seaside resort town of Magritta in Estalia. The Dungeonbowl is held in the Dwarf underground stadium at Barak-Varr (the upkeep for which is paid, at huge expense and much to the Dwarfs’ delight, by the Colleges of Magic). The location of the Chaos Cup tournament changes from year to year, and it is rare for anyone to know where it will be held until a week or two before the event starts! Not surprisingly this can make it very difficult for teams to attend the Chaos Cup, because if they are not in the right general vicinity when the tournament is announced then it may be impossible for them to get there in time to take part!

5.1 SEASONS & TOURNAMENTS

To represent this, all Blood Bowl leagues must have seasons that end with a tournament. The League Commissioner has the responsibility of setting up and running the seasons and tournaments for his league. He will need to let his coaches know how long the season will run for, and how the end-of-season tournament will be run.

If your coaches meet frequently and can play at least one-two games a week, then a three-month season based on the ‘real’ Blood Bowl world system should work well for you. If your league meets less frequently than this then you should consider having a longer season. As a rule of thumb, your season needs to be long enough for coaches to reasonably be expected to be able to play about a dozen matches.

At the end of the season you need to decide which teams will compete in the end-of-season tournament, how the tournament will be run, and what prize the winner of the tournament will receive. The only hard and fast rule about this is that there must be two semi-final matches followed by a final. Inducements are not allowed for these matches, it being assumed that the chance of winning a major trophy is inducement enough!

There are a number of ways of deciding who will play in the semi-finals. The simplest (though probably not the fairest) method is to use the four teams that have the highest value in the league. A simple variant of this method is to use the four team's with the highest win ratio, or to multiply a team's value by its win ratio and then pick the four highest rated teams. You can work out the win loss ratio by dividing the number of games the team has won by the number it has played. So, for example, a team that had a value of 1,800,000 gold pieces that had won 5 of its 10 matches, giving it a win ratio of 50%, would be 'worth' 50% of 1,800,000, which equals 900,000 gold pieces.

Another method is to have a 'play-off' period at the end of the regular season. Any coach can enter the play-offs, but must agree to play matches to a schedule set by the league commissioner. The commissioner must work out a schedule of matches, and a scoring or elimination system that will reduce the starting teams down to four contenders that will then take part in the semi-finals. There are lots and *lots* of ways to organise the play-offs, from straight knock-out events, to more complicated affairs that have a group stage first, such as that used for the soccer World Cup. We recommend you find out how some real-life tournaments are held, and then use the system that seems best for your Blood Bowl league. The league commissioner will also need to decide if inducements are allowed in the play-offs or not.

Finally, you can decide to run the regular season as a league with scheduled matches (like the FA Soccer League in the UK). Teams score points depending on how well they do in matches (typically 3 for a win, 1 for a draw and 1 for a loss, though 5 for a win, 3 for a draw, and 1 for a loss is a popular alternative). At the end of the season the four teams with the most league points get to go to the semi-finals.

Whatever method you use, the four teams that make it through to the semi-finals are matched into two pairs by random draw. The two winners of the semi-final match then go through to the big final, and the winner of the final will receive a trophy (see 5.2 below). Remember that teams do not receive inducements during semi-final and final matches.

5.2 THE GLITTERING PRIZES

Although the glory of winning a major tournament trophy is considered by many teams reason enough to take part, most teams are motivated as much (if not more) by the chance of winning the big cash prize that the sponsors of the tournament offer the winners. There are also often additional 'fringe' benefits for the winners of a major tournament, such as lucrative sponsorship deals or special prizes.

To represent this the teams taking part in an end of season tournament receives the following benefits:

1. The gate and the winnings for a semi-final or final is doubled.
2. The winner of a Major Tournament always receives a special trophy. Images of the trophies are at our website, www.bloodbowl.com and you can print these images and use them as trophies, or use the miniature trophies from the Blood Bowl trophy pack. Trophies also provide a benefit to the team in any games that they play as long as they have them. Each trophy a team has won entitles it to a special 'Trophy Re-roll' once per match. This re-roll is taken in exactly the same way as a Team Re-roll, except that it may only be used once per match (rather than once per half).

3. The winning team receives the ‘fringe benefit’ described below, depending on the trophy they have won.

5.2.1 The Spike! Magazine Trophy

This award, which takes the form of a mithril spike mounted on a delightful plinth, is awarded to the team that wins the Spike! Magazine tournament. Because the holder of the Spike! trophy receives extensive and (usually) positive coverage in Spike! magazine, the team’s fan factor is increased by 1 point for as long as they hold the trophy.

If the tournament organiser likes he may also choose to hand out the award for the Spike! Magazine Player of the Year after the final has been played. This award goes to the player in the league who has the most Star Player points, and adds +1 to the team’s Crowd Effect Modifier as long as the player is still on the team. Note that the player does not have to be in one of the teams that took part in the final, or even the tournament, in order to receive the reward.

5.2.2 The Dungeonbowl

Dungeonbowl is played, as its name suggests, in a dungeon. Originally the two teams started at opposite ends of a small underground complex, the idea being to get to the opponent’s starting position with the ball and score a touchdown, but eventually the game evolved so that it is played on a normal sized and shaped field – which just happens to be located in a dungeon!

The Dungeonbowl League is sponsored by the ten Colleges of Magic, and each College also supports one of the teams taking part in the tournament. Even though the idea was originally put forward to settle the matter of which College was the most powerful, and was to be a one-off event, Dungeonbowl has now been going for over 20 years and shows no sign of ending in the foreseeable future.

The winning team receives a special contract from the College that supported them. This contract allows the team to hire a Wizard for 80,000 gold pieces instead of the usual fee of 150,000 gold pieces as long as it holds the trophy.

5.2.3 The Chaos Cup

As you will see if you have a look at the trophy, the Chaos Cup is not exactly the most desirable of objects to win. The status it carries, however, is second only to the Blood Bowl. Originally known as the Whiteskull Challenge Cup, it was played for by eight top teams from the AFC while the conference winners were away competing in the Blood Bowl. With the collapse of the NAF in ’88 the Chaos Cup became the first trophy to be given away in the new style ‘Open’ tournaments.

The Chaos gods take a special, erm, interest in the fate of the team that holds the Chaos Cup, and will reward the players with special Chaos gifts as a sign of their favour. To represent this good fortune, as long as the team holds the trophy all the players in the team are allowed to take Mutations when they roll a 7.

5.2.4 The Blood Bowl

The most sought after trophy is the Bloodweiser Blood Bowl Championship Winners’ Trophy, commonly known as the Blood Bowl. Originally it was awarded to the winner of

the final match between the NFC and AFC Conference champions, but now it is awarded to the winner of the Blood Bowl Open tournament. Before 2461, the Blood Bowl championship games were fairly friendly – but competitive – affairs, played purely to award the status of Best Team in the World to the winners. With the arrival of big business in the shape of the Bloodweiser Corporation, however, the competition made a major stride in popularity. The prize money and Bloodweiser sponsorship deal that goes to the winners is said to be worth over a million crowns over the course of the following year. There is also the Blood Bowl trophy itself, otherwise known as the Buddy Grafstein trophy after the Bloodweiser chairman who first presented it. It's made from solid Dwarf gold, and as such is extremely valuable. This value has caused the original trophy to be stolen many times, and in fact the current one is the fourth trophy to be made!

The winners of the Blood Bowl get a sponsorship deal from Bloodweiser which adds 20,000 gold pieces to the prize money for each match that the team plays as long as it holds the trophy. The team receives this extra money even if they are over the league cap. For the players, however, the most important prize is the Blood Bowl player's medal awarded to each player (from both teams) that participates in the final. Receiving a Blood Bowl player's medal is a great confidence booster, so every single player that takes part in the Blood Bowl final (win or lose) counts as having been awarded a Most Valuable Player award and gains 5 Star Player points, in addition to the Most Valuable Player awards that are normally handed out for playing in the match.

5.2.4 Other Tournaments

The four Major Tournaments are not the only Blood Bowl competitions that are held over the course of the year. Many other tournaments take place, ranging in size from small local events involving only a handful of teams, through to really quite large events that rival the Major Tournaments in importance. Any League Commissioner who feels like organising tournaments based on these less important events should feel free to do so. You will need to work out your own 'fringe benefits' for these tournaments.

Two examples of typical minor tournaments are the Far Albion tournament and the Goblin Tribal Leeg. The Far Albion tournament is one of the more important minor tournaments. It is held on the distant island of Albion, northwest of the Old World across the Sea of Claws, which means that normally only one or two Old World teams make it to the island to compete against the local Blood Bowl teams. The Far Albion tournament cup (or FA Cup as it is known) used to be a stunning trophy, studded with diamonds and crusted with emeralds. Sadly it was stolen in 2145 and had to be replaced with what was meant to be a temporary tin replica. The original FA Cup never re-appeared, however, and now the battered old tin replacement has great sentimental value, especially for the local Albion teams.

At the other end of the scale is the Goblin Tribal Leeg. This tournament is normally held at round about the same time as Spike! Magazine tournament, as most Goblin teams can't afford to travel to far-off Estalia from their tribal lairs in the Darklands, and in any case Goblin players hate playing in the bright, sunny conditions under which the Spike! tournament is normally held. The Tribal Leeg tournament doesn't have a trophy or any prize money since it is all but impossible for a bunch of Goblins to arrange for a trophy and two different teams to be in the same place at the same time, and any prize money is

invariably stolen before the final takes place! This means that all the winner of the Goblin Tribal Leeg really gets is the undying support of a huge horde of Goblin fans, who follow the team around the Old World watching it play. Whether being followed around the Old World by a huge army of Goblin fans is actually a good thing is open to debate, but it certainly increases the support that the team receives every time that it plays a match!