

THE HISTORY OF GUILD BALL AND THE EMPIRE OF THE FREE CITIES



Guild Ball. It is a game like none other. The beautiful game you say? Maybe. I've not heard that one before. You wanted to know about it? Oh, I can tell you all about Guild Ball lad. Very few better placed than ol' Greyscales to point you in the right direction on that one. I've been a part of the game for more years than I care to remember.

It has risen to be ingrained in all of our lives, the ship further out to sea than they ever thought it might get. What was once an idea and then a solution now has a life of its own. It crosses the mountains, deserts, plains and the darkest, most primordial forests of our kingdoms, where no man in his right mind would choose to tread. It transcends the differences between the peoples of the Sovereign States and their nobles, politicians, kings, queens and princes and speaks in a common language where none exists. It binds our people together with ties stronger than any alliance that has come before or likely ever will. Even the gods of the greatest religions and pantheons look upon Guild Ball and are humbled, so fervent are the people in its worship, so widespread are they, from the poorest peasant wallowing in serfdom to the lord that he serves.

Whatever they might tell you, Guild Ball is now indispensable to the Empire of the Free Cities. Ruthless, bloodthirsty and vicious are all good words for it, but the clever mind that looks upon man knows that this has always been human nature, no matter how much he's learned or what gods he might have found. That's a dark truth boy, one that you might want to think on in years to come. Without the release, the raw euphoria, the cheering of the bloody violence, the wisest amongst us know that rivalries once forgotten would emerge from the darkest recesses of humanity as conflict, as war. We have seen it before, terrible atrocities, a darkness that threatened to overwhelm us. Instead, the players in the game are revered, heroes of a proud tradition rather than violent thugs. No matter who they are or what they might do, no matter that they represent corrupt organisations, only interested in furthering their own profit and power.

All that and more, these are the things that make the game known as Guild Ball. P'haps I like the name you called it – the beautiful game, was it? There's a certain irony there that rings true to this old seadog. But you want the real story of how it came to be this way, don't you? I thought that you might. To explain that, I'll have to take a little more time to tell you about the origins of the Empire of the Free Cities; the guilds that built the game to what she is now and how by doing it, they saved all of our lives.

You'd have to ask the bookworms over at the Scholar's Guild about when the Sovereign States first came into being as they are now, because the hell I know. If there ever was a name for this world before the Empire of the Free Cities or the Sovereign States, then it's long been forgotten and passed into the mists of time.

Long before there was anything like you see now, the tribes of men spread across the land and formed communities, villages and homesteads. After a time, they grew into towns, larger, with more people, banded together to look out for one another. Safety in numbers against a hard world outside of the walls. Probably didn't take long before most of them started feeling proud of where they called home and it started being part of who they were. Before too much water passed under the bridge, they fought against other people, other townships. Don't rightly know how they sold that one, what imagined reasons might have been come up with. Doesn't ever take man much excuse to spill blood in my experience. Whatever they might have said, the real motives were land and power. Carved out their own little dominions. I guess that was the start of it. Soon, there were kingdoms, with borders and armies, kings and nobles, and all of the things that come with them.

The guilds have always existed within our civilisation, for as long as any history you might read can recall. It's all the same story. In the early days of the first cities, groups of merchants got together and formed houses named after their trade to govern their business, which they called guilds. History books always leave out the part unsaid, about how much easier it was to better exploit their customers and inflate their prices that way. Couldn't think why, eh? No one knows which one was first and anyone that tells you different is talking out of his arse, but it hasn't stopped most of them claiming it over the years. It doesn't really matter in any case. In no time, all sorts of walks of life were setting themselves up that way. The guilds have never had any issue with numbers or supporters. Back then as much as now, probably even more so, upwards mobility was limited by station of birth and the guilds offered a nice way to get respect and earn a pretty penny on the side to its members. Don't know many that would turn that down.

As the isolated cities began to trade and establish ties to each other, so did the guilds do the same. Soon, all trades would be represented by one guild or another, in every city across the land. Once they were, the game changed. They never stopped competing with each other, but there was something new that the old guard who started the guilds out never dreamed of; internal conflict to gain power for one house or another, the rise of corruption and political infighting. That's a grand tradition now and no one alive has ever dreamed of it being any different. Once you sail out on that ship, there never is any looking back.

When the Sovereign States were born into the world, politically uniting cities and lands under one ruler, national guilds became a reality, neatly fitting in alongside. That was the real shift in their fortunes; when guilds not only controlled all practice of their particular craft, but started rubbing shoulders with the men and women that held the power that they didn't have. Every one of them greedily fished for a catch that was right in front of them but yet just out of reach at that point. It all became a quest for political influence with the state; pursuing their own agendas over that of their rivals, making coalitions where they needed them and casting them aside like a rough haul once they had outlived their usefulness. Always been the truth that the houses of the guilds can be fractious and prone to infighting, but just as true is that they are unified by how much they don't get along with any of the other guilds. One big battle for respect and pride, kept grounded as long as the rulers didn't pay them too much mind.

The Sovereign States that would eventually be united into the Empire of the Free Cities existed this way for generations, the people living out their lives, paying fealty to the nobility and their gods and toiling under the watchful eye of the guilds. In the cities and towns traditions and culture started to develop; religions took root and each drifted further apart from those that sailed different seas. In all things they became less alike and stared at their neighbours; increasingly wary and untrusting, always vigilant for hostility. Then came the Century Wars.

No-one can remember the cause for the Century Wars or who fired the first shot across the bows; for all that they devastated the land, murdered our peoples and brought civilization to its knees. I won't even try to explain it, but I've seen war in my lifetime and I can tell you, when people have been fighting for a long enough stretch of years, the meaning gets forgotten and the violence itself becomes the cause. The horrible memories end up shared communally in a place, even if no one was there to see them. One group hates another because that group hates them, that's about all that might ever be needed. No one thinks beyond that.

What is known that rather than try to end the conflict, the nobles and the rulers of the Sovereign States seemed happy to bleed their cities' coffers and populations dry in self destructive battles and engagements that seemed like they would never end. Didn't take long before it was always a wash. As many dead or dying on the winning side as the losing one, if there even was a clear winner. One day you'd take some land, a couple of miles worth shit to anyone, set up your flag and tents and then the next day you lose it again. The only thing that changed was that both armies were a couple hundred men lighter afterwards. Even worse for those of us out at sea, we didn't have anything to show, just marks on a map that got scratched out. Sometimes not even that.

With no decisive end in the spyglass that anyone believed might happen and every State using ever more destructive and inventive weaponry each day to make up for the lack of men in their quest for victory, it was to guilds that unexpectedly fell the mantle of mediators of peace.

As I said before, the guilds had long since held ambitions which reached far beyond the limits placed on them and their business interests by fickle and self serving politicians or the nobility. By the time of the outbreak of the Century Wars, the oldest and most powerful guilds had begun to at last exert some influence over the ruling class, but it had been to their considerable chagrin that they had still been unable to have any lasting hold on any real power.

War, and the inevitable upheaval that it brought to the world, gave them much greater freedom to pursue their dealings with a variety of more direct threats and without being undermined by the state. At first some of them, always the foolish ones, celebrated as the older, wiser birds sat on the rocks and watched on. But when the years rolled by and the conflict had devastated their industries and trading, it started hitting the guilds hard, reducing their wealthy coffers and what influence they had amassed. I can tell you that a whole bunch of them in the Fisherman's Guild at least got to thinking that the Century Wars would likely destroy the guilds and all that they had worked for. I reckon me that near all of them must have thought it, obvious really. How are you going to do any business with all the people poor, homeless, dead? It took nearly the death of the world as we know it, but in this one instance, nearly all of the guilds could all agree. The Century Wars had to end.

Fortunately for all of us, with independent ties between their houses within the Sovereign States, the guilds found themselves almost ideally placed to act and put an end to the hostilities. I don't rightly know how they all got together or decided who would approach the nobles, monarchies, dictators and the holy men, or how they managed to bring them all over to the new way of thinking. P'haps some of them saw the light and a way out, although I'd wager a month's purse that at least a handful of them needed some sort of special handling, if you get my drift. I can think of one particular King that was found floating face down in the Monde, can't say whether there were more I didn't hear of.

Finally, after considerable negotiation, the Century Wars were over. They'd agreed that the land and all of the Sovereign States were to be unified as the Empire of the Free Cities. You might think that people were dancing in the street to hear it, that there were parades or cheering crowds, armies returning home to greet their loved ones. There was none of that. Every man, woman and child were just exhausted. I remember when we found out most of us just collapsed to the ground. Didn't seem real. You'd probably think that strange young blood, can't imagine it, eh? Well, that's what it was.

Officially, everyone remembers it in the history books as the crowning achievement of a grand alliance lead by the Skaldic King, Gustav VI of the Holstmann dynasty. I think that as time passes, they probably will forget the truth. The guilds designed it that way. The Old Skaldic Empire became Skald, the first principle domain of the Empire of the Free Cities and the monarchy revelled in the platitudes heaped upon them. But you remember a moment ago when I said that everyone just sighed, exhausted at the end? There was one group that gleefully rubbed their hands together and smiled, hidden in the shadows out of sight. Quietly, the guilds looked on satisfied, for at last, they had achieved the position of power that had eluded them for so long.

But within the new unified land, a sudden vacuum existed, a tenuous peace after years of conflict between a disparate and varied populace with few common ties. Whilst the Sovereign States started the long road to rebuilding their shattered lands and people, it became obvious that something would need to be done, some institution would need to be established to bind us all together, or see everything break down all over again. That lad, was when the idea of nationalising the mob football games from the early days was reborn, as Guild Ball.

It wasn't anything new really. Way back when, it had been a ritual, a ceremonial thing that happened in settlements to celebrate the last autumnal harvests. Sounds like an idea from a madman now, but originally they played in the middle of towns and villages. Didn't have the stands, or the carefully set out pitches and dugouts for the teams. Just six or seven holy men on either side, a ball, made out of an inflated pig's bladder wrapped in leather and the local people watching, all standing around. Object was to take the ball and kick it into the other teams post, set in the ground out on the other side of wherever it was they were playing their game.

Now, I couldn't rightly say why anything in this world happens the way it does, but it seems obvious to me that it would grow into something bigger than an event that happened once a year at a harvest ritual. And it did, became a sport, the origins long since forgotten. You ever hear of a holy day of worship on the last day of the harvest lad? Thought not.

Of course, as the years had passed and the game grew in popularity, they had to move it out to the countryside. It's a world of difference having a bunch of doddering old goats walking around a place, speaking in sermons and praying to their gods for a some deliverance or another than it is to have young men and women trying to win a game there, all aggression. You get a lot of collateral damage, if you get my drift. That's when the game started being played on the specially made pitches, in fields set aside for the purpose. Now, the old boys weren't too happy to have their ceremony stolen from them, as you'd expect. That's where the name mob football came from. It was meant as a slight, to describe the cattle mentality of the people that went to go see the games. Spiteful name, but I can't say that anyone took offence.

It spread everywhere quickly and soon everyone was playing it. Nothing too serious as we know it now, just locals kicking the ball around one afternoon a week, but in every place you can name and more. It all stopped when the Century Wars came. The young men and women that played the games got dragged off to fight and the pitches were neglected, either overgrown or dried out, markings all faded. I hear that the Bookworms send out Magisters to find these old forgotten playing grounds, so they can mark them out as cultural heritage sites or some crap like that. Waste of time if you ask me. But that was how the game was then, abandoned. Until the guilds got a hold on it.

When the guilds saw mob football, they saw the opportunity to do something grand with the idea. It was unique in that it was popular in every village, town and city throughout the Empire, the only knot that tied all of the ropes together. With the backing of the guilds to formerly establish

teams, leagues and tournaments, and the vast sums of money invested to achieve this, Guild Ball become the new national sport of the Empire of the Free Cities overnight.

Originally they had in mind that it would give the people something to unite them and stop another war. Some other visionary with too much time on his hands came up with the idea that Guild Ball would let them settle disputes between guilds, offer a decision making process outside of the official channels or politics. But really, if it was either of those things, then they were overshadowed quickly by the struggle amongst the guilds. Having brokered the peace and shown the ruling classes that they were to be feared for what they represented, the guilds were now swollen with power. Guild Ball couldn't shake off the fact that ultimately, the guilds ran it. And as they stepped into their new boots after the Century Wars were over, it became just another tool in their arsenal of intimidation against each other.

For the guilds, the game means something very different to the rest of us, a way that they maintain their grasp over the Sovereign States by reminding their rulers of the threat that the guilds represent, all the time dancing to the tune of a much more deadly game against each other. But without the spectacle of Guild Ball and the guilds themselves binding everyone together, I fear that the Empire of the Free Cities would have long since fallen apart.

In a new era of peace and a period of endless possibility, the guilds now see a whole new business and revenue stream, and with it huge opportunities for amassing further wealth and power. With the potential being so vast and with their fierce rivals involved in the conflict of Guild Ball, the guilds now each have a vested interest in providing their chosen teams with training, equipment and facilities to try and tip the edge in their favour. Each match ups the stakes and makes the game bigger than ever before.

All of that makes for better watching for you or I, or even better still, a very good way of life if you can make it in the game.

And that lad is Guild Ball, our national sport. Wildly popular, played in front of thousands of roaring spectators hungry for blood, victory and glory, whilst behind the scenes the results can mean fortunes are won or lost on the kick of a ball.

Oh, so you want to be a player in the game eh? You should have said so sooner. Come with me and I'll show you the ropes...

- Greyscales, Fisherman's Guild Vice Captain



SOVEREIGN STATES OF THE EMPIRE OF THE FREE CITIES

SKALD

Skald is one of the most populous Sovereign States within the Empire of the Free Cities. It is located in a relatively central position on the northern part of the continent and is bisected by the major land trade routes to the eastern and southern states from the north-west.

Such a position historically proved to be both extremely lucrative for the old Skaldic Empire and tragic in equal measure. For all that in times of peace, Skald was able to levy tithes upon any commerce that travelled through its borders, during the Century Wars those same passageways became the roads which armies marched upon. Devastated by the conflict, it is a testament to the resolve of the Skaldic peoples and their sense of purpose that Skald has rebuilt with remarkable alacrity and once again risen to great prominence.

The Sovereign State of the Old Skaldic Empire was long regarded by its people as the seat of civilization on the continent and there remains the same long-standing attitude of superiority towards their peers. Cities within this state easily represent the heaviest civic sector funding on the continent. Skald boasts the most governmental buildings within the entirety of the Empire of the Free Cities and the largest bureaucratic body.

Skaldic people have their own style in all things; from fashion to eating habits, they are extremely resistant to outside influences from the other Sovereign States. The only element that appears to have been able to permeate this cultural ideal is religion. Skald is almost exclusively given to the worship of the Solthecian faith, robust churches standing proud in most villages and towns. In the cities, the walls and roads are lined with spectacular stonework and artistry of saints and blessed angels, spectacular cathedrals dominate the skyline.

Skald is a monarchy with a royal family which has held their seat since the first formation of the Old Empire. The King is the head of state, but Skald is ruled by a Parliament. The government conducts the affairs of state, from domestic affairs to foreign policy, as well as regulating taxes and controlling the centralised mint. Ultimately, the monarch is able to dissolve or form government as is his wish, although in reality, the royal family are puppets to the politicians and have very little free rein with which to conduct their own affairs.

The capital city of Skald is Aldebrecht, a huge, swarming city, filled with people of all persuasions and of varied descent. There are several districts throughout, the buildings of each grandiose and extravagantly decorated. Nowhere is this more evident than in the real centre of power of the city, the guild district. Following the rebuilding of the city after the wars, each strived to outdo their rivals in construction, the result being sweeping buildings of dynamic design and with a wildly prominent sense of grand affluence. It is a common sight to see hurried messengers and tradesmen bustling past awestruck visitors in the streets surrounding them.

VALENTIA

Valentia is located along the westernmost coast of the Empire of the Free Cities. It is warm with a pleasant climate, its towns and villages famous for their finely regarded vineyards, picturesque cobbled streets and romantic old world villas. Summers are long, the forests abundant with wildlife, the coasts lavish and calm.

There is a rich Valentian tradition of the Sovereign State being the home of arts and culture throughout the Empire of the Free Cities, from long before the Century Wars. A home to sculptors, artists, actors and musicians, Valentia is a noble ideal to those outside of its borders.

For those that live within the cities of Valentia, nothing could be further removed from the truth. Despite her reputation, the state was never an affluent one and with many of her cities and grand works destroyed during the Century Wars, she is unable to pay the cost of rebuilding. Those same artisans now sleep in doorways or ruined buildings at night. During the day they either beg for the scraps of a passerby or perform in the marketplaces for coppers of an uncaring crowd, all of whom have seen each tired performance one time too many.

Minor crime such as petty theft is rife. The poor rural areas outside of the cities are safer but lack civic investment, contributing to a much lower standard of life than is evident amongst their counterparts from other states. Some amount of private investment from wealthy individuals has enabled a select few of the towns to avoid the same fate and has contributed to creating a unique middle class amongst the Empire of the Free Cities; primarily consisting of guild officials with an eye to become landowners.

For the nobility of Valentia life remains as was, albeit with barely any semblance of any real power. Their grand estates are remote from the cities and the hard life of the peasantry, although the wiser amongst them secretly wonder how long before the lower class revolts at the terrible conditions that they are forced to endure. The gap between the rich and the poor in Valentia is extremely pronounced, with literally no chance of upwards mobility. Even the most humanitarian nobles are forced to look the other way when food riots and murders of government officials occur for risk of being dragged into events far beyond their ability to control. Each of the nobility know that as soon as the first of their guardsman is seen to intervene, it will set a dangerous precedent and establish a commitment none of them are willing to place upon their fragile comfort.

The unspoken consensus amongst the landed gentry is that they are likely the last generation of traditional Valentian nobility. That once they have passed on or their coffers run dry, the guilds will claim their lands and titles for themselves. Each day, they watch the end of old Valentia grow closer.

ETHRAYNNE

Ethraynne is a relatively new Sovereign State that began life as part of Valentia. Prior to the Century Wars, a short and bloody civil uprising in the region resulted in a declaration of independence and the creation of Ethraynne as a Sovereign State in its own right.

Although the State consists of some twenty individual isles, with ships regularly travelling between them, the three largest play home to the most highly populated concentrations of urban settlements and house all of the government buildings. Sharing the same climate, language and cultural history as Valentia, traditionally the islands have been regarded as a considerably poorer and less artistically accomplished orphan to their neighbours on the mainland.

This certainly would have been a fair assessment before the Century Wars. Luckily for Ethraynne their perceived lack of military importance and the Valentian navy's preoccupation with the Raed meant that by boon of natural geographic safety, they escaped the ravages of the Century Wars as an impartial observer.

In the years during and following the Century Wars, the Ethraynnian people were able to nurture a rapidly expanding infrastructure and series of public improvements. The towns and villages of Ethraynne are some of the

most beautiful and scenic amongst all of the Empire of the Free Cities, her citizens friendly and courteous. In the western regions of the Empire of the Free Cities, there has developed a significant shift of political and economic power towards Ethraynne, much to the dismay of the Valentian nobility.

Although initially opposed to unification, the Ethraynnian people have since grown to accept the adoption of a national identity with the mainland. This is undoubtedly due to the extremely lucrative trading that occurs between the guilds on the islands and their counterparts in other Sovereign States. The ports of Ethraynnian cities bustle with activity and industry, as the trade ships and fishing trawlers of several surrounding states arrive and depart at all hours of the day.

Ethraynne is known for her great inventions and scientific innovations, the founder houses of many of the contemporary guilds are located upon her shores. The Astronomer's Guild, the Alchemist's Guild and the Engineer's Guild all maintain large and influential guild houses in Ethraynne, with only the latter having its ruling house elsewhere. There is a new scientific movement which is beginning to gather momentum and importance in the Empire of the Free Cities, its roots firmly located in this Sovereign State.

RAEDLAND

In the times before the Century Wars, Raedland was a powerful state with several interests across what would now be further flung parts of the Empire of Free Cities, all administered by a centralised government on the Raed mainland. In those days, Raedland maintained a mighty fleet that ruled the surrounding oceans and provided her with much revenue. They taxed the great fishing trawlers of Eisnor and Erskirad, as well as being able to exert considerable militaristic pressure and assistance in establishing outposts and colonies.

During the war, Raedland had to sacrifice each of her assets one after another. Her navy was stretched beyond its ability to sustain supply lines and forced fight a war on multiple fronts. As continued news of successive defeats and the fall of once impregnable fortresses overseas mounted, it became apparent that the war effort was not going well. The remnants of a now devastated military would be needed in its entirety to protect the mainland from invasion.

During a time when both Valentian and Erskirii armies threatened to begin landing on the shores of Raedland, and with the Queen and her sycophantic supporters indecisive at the height of the crisis, the Raed military were



KEY	
★	Capital City
●	City/Notable Town
---	Country Border
~	Notable River
⌄	Mountains



forced into a coup d'état to wrest power for themselves and the good of the nation. With power over the army and navy consolidated, the difficult decision to abandon the remaining colonial cities was made.

Life for the Raed became a hard existence; the citizenry that had not already been conscripted were forced to take up arms to support the depleted military in repelling the invading forces. After long months of bloody urban warfare in the streets of coastal towns and cities, and of bitter naval engagements, Raedland could call her shores her own again.

Raedland now continues to exist as a military state, unable to support herself without the army to feed the populace, keep the peace and provide a continued sense of stability. Despite the efforts of reformers within the State, the people of Raedland have long memories of the ills of the royal family and the nobility. They have welcomed the application of martial law to put down the protests of the royalists that the monarchy be reinstated.

Raedland is a rustic and scenic isle, filled with large, roaming deciduous forests and long tracts of open grassland. The cities of this Sovereign State are considerably smaller than those of her peers and her citizenry for the most part is widely spread throughout small villages that continue a feudal existence, the peasantry still primarily farmers.

To the north is Maldriven, a wild and mountainous region, with its own strong cultural and national heritage. Here, the people are fierce and proud, and the Guild Houses and the production centres of the Brewer's Guild dwarf their counterparts in the other cities of the Raed.

PIERVO

Piervo is the smallest Sovereign State of the Empire of the Free Cities, only consisting of one city and its surrounding areas of countryside, pastures and farmland. During the Century Wars, Piervo's army was unable to do anything beyond withdraw to the safety of the city walls and prepare the populace for siege warfare.

Any other Sovereign State would have been long since annexed by a marauding army and her citizens put to death, as was the end of several Sovereign States in the Far East. But for Piervo this would not be her fate, for she is the holy city of Soltheician Order, the most widespread religion throughout the Empire of the Free Cities.

The head of state of both Piervo and the Soltheician spiritual faith is known as the Bacchus and is elected by mandate of the god Soltheicius; his divine will manifested by the archbishops and cardinals. The role is unlike any other clerical or royal position throughout the Empire of the Free Cities; the Bacchus is able to influence several Sovereign States where the faith has any sort of foothold and even more so where it is the predominant religion.

During the Century Wars, Bacchus Alexandria IV and his successor, Bacchus Galbratii, were able to successfully negotiate with any Sovereign State that turned her sights to Piervo. They spared its people from the horror of the conflict beyond the walls and saved the city and its ancient religious landmarks from ruin time and time again.

Although to believers this leader is the chosen of Soltheicius, in reality, any election of a Bacchus is a process of shrewd manoeuvring, underlying threats, and careful alliance. Thus, the head of state is often possessed of a considered political mind. Many followers would likely be surprised to learn how deep corruption runs within Soltheician faith and how self interested its leaders tend to be.

The Holy City is home to spectacular architecture and beautiful gardens; high domed cathedrals compete against monasteries with spires that point into the skies like crooked fingers. Statues old and new line every boulevard and street. Every hour, bells ring out and the scent of incense is thick in the air. Wherever an individual might stand in Piervo, there is at very least a low hum of penitent followers deep in prayer and every day the city is flooded with pilgrims come to demonstrate their faith.

This is not to say that industry does not exist within the walls, far from it. The Butcher's Guild's ruling house is in Piervo and has existed as the sole purveyor of sacred meat to the Bacchus for generations; something which its many Magisters and Chamberlains are keen to remind both visiting officials and those of other guilds. The Mortician's Guild also holds significant influence amongst the clergy in Piervo; the two bodies frequently working hand in hand in the day to day lives of the population. In many senses, Piervo is a city much like any other.

EISNOR

Eisnor is the name given to a loose collection of townships occupying the furthest northern point of the Empire of the Free Cities. Unified more by their differences to the other Sovereign States than to each other, they share only a handful of common traditions and customs at most. There are few

cities this far to the north, the most populous being Luemmyr and Kjet. The populace lives sparsely at the edge of the known world, each a small community in which every member has a role to play to ensure survival of their village or clan. There are no ruling families or nobility in Eisnor, nor a royal family. Instead, there is a council of each settlement, which governs each region individually. Although in the smaller villages these almost always are elected by tradition and age, the elders hold no sway in the few cities and larger townships where corruption and bribery has meant that powerful guild officials vie against each other for the seats.

The people of Eisnor are a hardy and rugged seafaring race, their main industries being hunting and fishing. In these remote climes, the bounty is not the same tame wildlife of the other Sovereign States, but much more primal and savage creatures. Those same creatures provide considerable wealth for the Eisnoran people; their pelts, ivory and meat highly valued by foreign traders. Even greater financial reward can be garnered if the exotic creatures are able to be taken alive to be sold to collectors from far flung states. For Eisnorans, the practice of keeping such creatures is entirely alien, but one that they are happy to profit from. Such is the benefit of inclusion to the Empire of the Free Cities.

Of all the Sovereign States, organised religion is least influential in Eisnor; her people still worshipping the pantheon of pagan deities that they have paid tribute to since settling these lands. In each town, city or settlement are multitudes of simple and ancient shrines to the Gods of the Hunt, Lords of the Deep, and the Goddess of the Harvest, to name but the most popular. Because more widespread education and literacy has not spread at the same pace amongst the Eisnoran people, many of these holy traditions and the identities of the Gods that they worship are passed down from father to son. In more progressive quarters the rites of some have now all but been forgotten; civilizing influence has begun to creep into the cities and the old statues crumble in the wilderness, abandoned to the elements.

CASTELLYA

Castellya is a land ruled by dynastic families of nobles; lords descendent from old knightly orders, appointed by a royal family that died without heirs and left no legitimate claimants to their throne. The old royal palaces have long stood empty, their histories only known to those scholars that would seek to study them. In Castellya, very little emphasis is put upon the social status of such a profession, along with other academic pursuits.

During the Century Wars the armies of Castellya were some of the most active and best equipped forces through the realm. Above all others, it was the Castellyian armies that could most legitimately claim martial victory; for all that her military ambitions were eventually greatly curtailed by dwindling strategic resources.

The nobility still encourage aggressive overtures towards their neighbouring states when they are not at arms against each other. Castellya maintains large garrisons of soldiery and standing state armies, as well as each noble house being able to field their own considerable retinue. Social progression via the military is a viable choice, indeed it is how many of the lesser nobles with smaller estates have achieved their position of standing within Castellyian society.

It is unusual for the nobility themselves to spend much time in their grand residences however, more likely they will be found at the court of the ruling dynasty. Grave insult is inferred by absence at such proceedings without suitable justification and is likely followed by expulsion from court for a period of time. Falling from favour so severely is likely to seriously damage a noble families' standing for years.

Guild houses within this region are equally as grandiose as the buildings of the nobility and whilst not as overtly powerful, they are quite capable of directing the internal and foreign policy of the governing dynasties as is required. The same impassioned and fiery Castellyian temperament that rules the nobles is also rife within the guilds and is frequently noted by emissaries from other Sovereign States to be the reason that the guild masters have never truly taken control of Castellya. For all that the government is limited by infighting and the ancestral grudges of the noble families, so the guilds fight amongst themselves in the same sense.

FIGO

Separated from Castellya by the old pilgrim trail towards the Holy City of Piervo, Figo shares much with her sister state. Beyond subtle regional variations, citizens of both states share the same language and customs, the same hot-headed temperament in their peoples and a common ancestry which can be traced back to far before the Century Wars.

Despite this, even in times of peace and prosperity the nations have been the nemesis of each other in all things. In spite of the armistice that exists within the Empire of Free Cities following the end of the Century Wars, Figo and Castellya continue to regularly engage in border skirmishes; usually at the behest of warring noble families that have grudges stretching back for generations.

Unlike landlocked Castellya, Figo has a long stretch of coastline leading out to the expansive southern ocean. The Figeon naval tradition is as strong as that of her armies and even in these times of peace, her proud galleons and frigates are a familiar reminder that Figeon ships rule the seas.

This continues into her cities, where the presence of the polytheistic ocean gods is felt as strongly as that of the Solthecian faith. Rather than in Castellya, where the spires of the many grand cathedrals of the Solthecian Order reach into the skies, in Figo the faith is instead represented by much more sober monasteries and humble churches. These exist alongside the shrines and temples of the many oceanic deities that are worshipped here by the Figeon sailors and merchantmen. It is even known for men from far off Eisnor to frequent these holy sites when they are docked in port.

Understandably, the Fisherman's Guild has considerable influence in the south of the State and has some ties with trade further inland, but this is by no means a monopoly. The Brewer's Guild have their own district in the capital Gacildra, a beautiful and mysterious city built over a series of canals and elegant waterways. The Butcher's Guild also take advantage of this bustling trade hub and stock their ships here for travel to the southern Sovereign States of the Empire of the Free Cites.

As the crow flies north from Gacildra and the cities begin to resemble those of Castellya, the other guild houses become apparent. Following an epidemic of Lung Rot, an illness which once destroyed nearly two thirds of the Figeon populace before it was cured, the Mortician's Guild gained a position of power that has continued to exist into the present day. The current ruling house of the Mortician's Guild is based in Fiscerano, a centrally placed city dominated by great graveyards, tombs and memorial sites to those unfortunates.

ERSKIRAD

Located in the frozen north-east, Erskirad is a harsh land of broken plains of tundra, ravines, and mountains. The people from this desolate region are a pragmatic and hard race who do not suffer fools gladly. Their ancestors were able to first establish their homes in a seemingly inhospitable climate in spite of the elements and that same determination has continued to influence the mindset of their descendants.

When travelling outside of the Sovereign State, Erskirii people are regarded as miserable individuals with no sense of humour and a vile temper. For their part, an Erskirii considers those of the southern Sovereign States decadent

and flippant, far too easy with their praise. It is rare that individuals other than guild officials have travelled outside of the boundaries of Erskirad since the end of the Century Wars and perhaps this is for the best.

Religion is very important in Erskirad and all of its citizens are extremely pious. The capital city, Yureslan, is the birthplace of the kathenotheist order of the Svantelit and is the only religious order that is allowed buildings or sacred sites throughout the state. Any found to be outspoken against the Svantelit, or to extol the virtues of alternative faiths are imprisoned and subject to the whim of the Svantelii inquisitorial order. Those who do not repent and convert are burned to death in one of the many public squares across the land. Perhaps unsurprisingly for such an uncompromising and intractable faith, the order of Svantelit is yet to spread further afield from Erskirad.

Erskirad is a place of extremes. It has long-standing institutions which dominate society; the military and its mighty history of expansion, the Royalty that wars bitterly at court and of course, the guilds. As with Valentia, the difference between the affluent ruling classes and poor citizenry is extremely pronounced. Whilst the politicking in higher society leads to uneasy alliance or disenfranchisement, the rich negotiate lucrative trade agreements and the poor lead simple and bleak lives.

Almost all of the population are centred in huge, sprawling cities. Each of these has carefully demarcated areas for the common and privileged, areas set aside for industry, residence, and commerce. For a citizen, there are only two methods to improve his or her life, which many are loathe to embrace. The first is advancement within the military, which can lead to a respectable standing, if limited by a glass ceiling of patronage and nepotism. The Erskirii Military does not offer an easy existence however, and many will spend long years away from their families at a cold and lonely outpost, left to fend for themselves.

The second is considerably both less reputable and more dangerous, and is to become a member of one of the many undercity gangs. In each of the colossal cities exists a vast hive network of sewers and slums, where self appointed gang leaders extract protection money, fight turf wars and trade in illegal goods. These gangs are always welcoming of fresh members as fighting between them occurs on an almost daily basis in some form or another. It is hope of each ganger that they might attract the attention of one of the guilds within the city, who may employ them as a henchman, pulling them up out of the grime, to a new life.



THE GAME

Mob football was a game generally played between neighbouring towns and villages on feast days. Players on opposing teams clashed and struggled to control a leather-wrapped inflated pig's bladder and attempt to kick it into the opponent's goal. Over the years, rudimentary leagues and tournaments sprang up throughout the Empire of Free Cities; there were even some national level games between the city states.

The powerful mercantile Guilds have taken advantage of the huge popularity of the sport, investing vast sums of money and creating professional teams who compete in structured leagues. With the game elevated to new heights of spectacle, Guild Ball is wildly popular with the masses.

Games are now played out in front of vast crowds of fans, whilst behind the scenes, hidden in the corridors of power, the results can mean fortunes are won or lost on the kick of a ball.

In a typical Guild Ball match, teams compete to outscore their opponents. Games may be won through scoring more goals, or simply battering the other team into the ground.

With no set length, Guild Ball matches accelerate towards the end of the game, with everything coming down to the last throw of the dice.





ON LIFE AND DEATH IN GUILD BALL

Many would think that in a ruthless sport such as Guild Ball, where players accept the risk of crippling injury every time they run out onto the pitch, death would be commonplace. In reality nothing could be further from the truth. Guild Ball's rules expressively forbid any one player from taking the life of another, something established early after peasant football's evolution into Guild Ball.

In the cut-throat Empire of the Free Cities a person could be forgiven for being surprised at this policy; seemingly at odds with the guild's typically callous disregard for the concerns or lives of the population. However, to those more educated observers, the reasoning behind it is simple. The guilds consider their players commodities; pieces in their political machinations. Each one represents considerable investment and financial expenditure. The rule is fundamental therefore in protecting the guild's interests above all else; the beneficial side effect for the players being a degree of safety from an untimely end.

Any player or team found to be deliberately violating this rule is treated with extremely strict and brutal reprisal – although of course, accidents have been known to happen. Guild Ball has a high council made up of representatives from all of the guilds which oversees such incidents and passes final judgement in such matters. Over the years, these select officials have become almost an autonomous body of their own, aloof and apart from their peers. Even amongst the guilds themselves it is of constant frustration that they are as such unable to exert any of their considerable power in influencing any decision that the council might be called upon to make.

A much more regular occurrence however is injury. These range from simple sprains or concussion; all the way through to more career threatening injuries such as severe blood loss, smashed joints and broken or even severed limbs. The rules of Guild Ball do little to protect a player from this and the game is rife with hidden agendas – those of teams with long standing rivalries, players with personal vendettas and the guilds' own intrigues and conspiracies. These often manifest themselves on the pitch as symbolic displays of barbarity.

Fortunately for the unlucky players on the receiving end of these injuries there is one guild which remains neutral in both the Empire of the Free Cities and in Guild Ball. For a modest stipend that is annually charged to all of the guilds, the Physicians Guild maintains the apothecaries that brave the open war of the pitch during games; dragging badly injured players to safety and treating their injuries at the side of the pitch. Those that have trauma too severe to be so easily helped, the Physician's Guild will send to one of their local guild houses to treat, where they are able to induce their mysterious and secretive accelerated healing. By these means players are never out of action for a prolonged period, often only missing a match at most.

Of course most of the guilds, particularly the older and more established, have attempted to coerce individuals from the Physician's Guild to become private apothecaries for their respective teams. As yet, not one has betrayed their oath of membership to the Physician's Guild. Little wonder when you consider that despite their role as healers within the Sovereign States of the Empire of the Free Cities, the Physician's Guild are still just as likely to resolve betrayal with swift violence...

THE BUTCHER'S GUILD



Who are they lad? That team there? That's the Butchers and you don't want any part of them if you can avoid it. They're a real heavy set. Killers, every one of them, even the kid over there; he probably doesn't even know it yet. But if those swine are willing to take him on, you can bet that they've seen it in him, even if he hasn't.

Teab, these boys only play their Guild Ball one way. Pounding down the pitch in a headlong charge, a juggernaut driven into the opposition that leaves a mess behind 'em that makes most shipwrecks look more salvageable. Whole team knows its business far too well for my liking. You take the captain of the ship; the Ox they call him, ain't no one probably brave enough to ask him his real name. That's one mean bastard. He's been the head of the crew for a fair few seasons and before that he had as bad a reputation as it gets. If he makes you his mark, you can bet you're going to be lucky to walk away from that game. The others are just as bad.

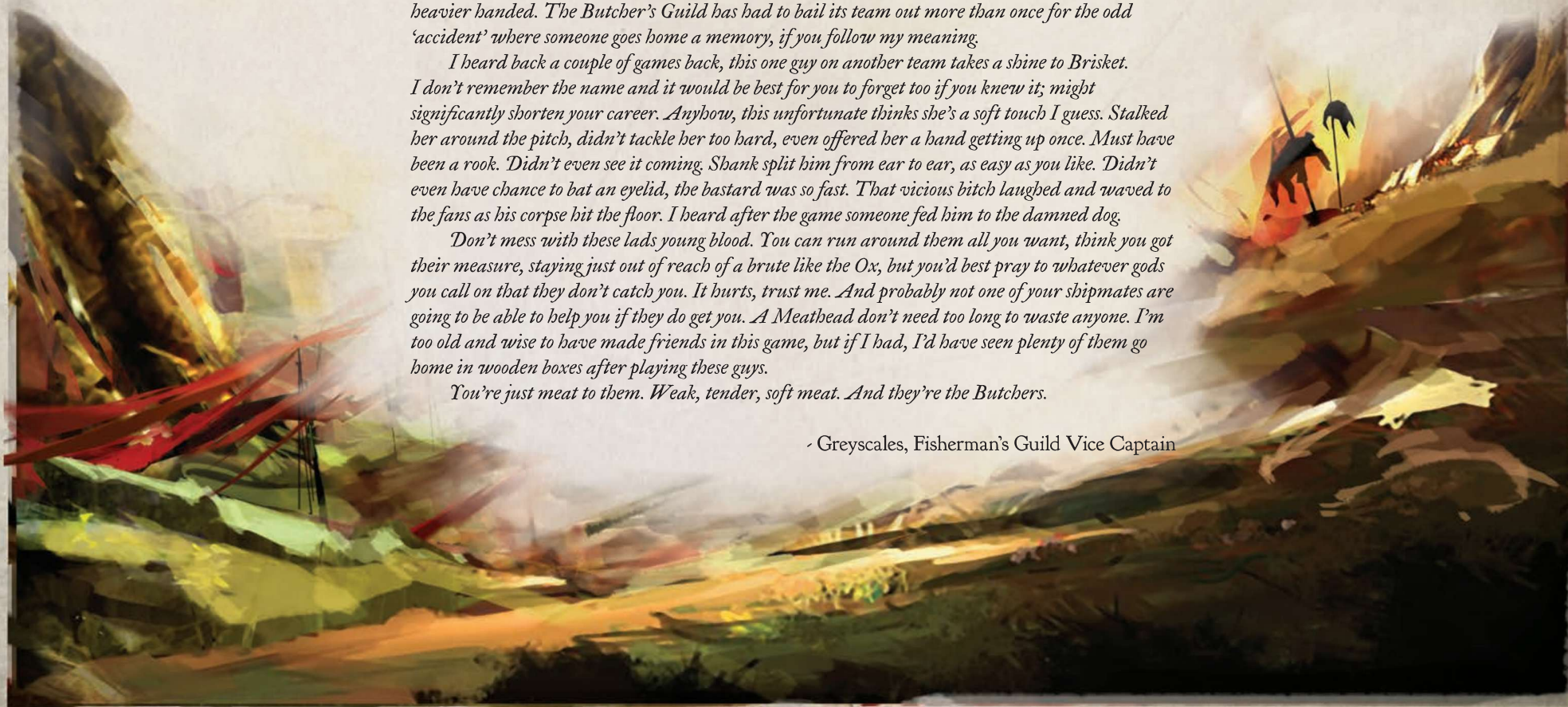
Thing that scares everyone though is that they've got themselves a heavy rep over the years for forgetting the rules on occasion. Against any team you can get wasted, but these boys are much heavier handed. The Butcher's Guild has had to bail its team out more than once for the odd 'accident' where someone goes home a memory, if you follow my meaning.

I heard back a couple of games back, this one guy on another team takes a shine to Brisket. I don't remember the name and it would be best for you to forget too if you knew it; might significantly shorten your career. Anyhow, this unfortunate thinks she's a soft touch I guess. Stalked her around the pitch, didn't tackle her too hard, even offered her a hand getting up once. Must have been a rook. Didn't even see it coming. Shank split him from ear to ear, as easy as you like. Didn't even have chance to bat an eyelid, the bastard was so fast. That vicious bitch laughed and waved to the fans as his corpse hit the floor. I heard after the game someone fed him to the damned dog.

Don't mess with these lads young blood. You can run around them all you want, think you got their measure, staying just out of reach of a brute like the Ox, but you'd best pray to whatever gods you call on that they don't catch you. It hurts, trust me. And probably not one of your shipmates are going to be able to help you if they do get you. A Meatbead don't need too long to waste anyone. I'm too old and wise to have made friends in this game, but if I had, I'd have seen plenty of them go home in wooden boxes after playing these guys.

You're just meat to them. Weak, tender, soft meat. And they're the Butchers.

- Greyscales, Fisherman's Guild Vice Captain



BOAR

SHANK

OX

BOILER

BRISKET

MEAT HOOK

PRINCESS



TEAMS



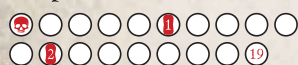
Ox
Skaldic, Human, Male, Captain,
Attacking Midfielder

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5/8" 7 3/6" 3+ 1 4/5

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays

Tough Skin: 1 4" Yes
Target friendly model gains [+1] ARM. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

He Ain't Tough!: 2 / 6" Yes
Target enemy model suffers [-1] ARM.

Butchery: 2 / 6" Yes
Friendly models gain [+1] DMG to Playbook damage results against target enemy model.

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

The Owner [4" Aura]
While within this aura, friendly models gain [+1] DMG to Character Plays that cause damage and Playbook damage results.

Legendary Play

Get Em Lads! [6" Aura]
While within this aura, friendly models gain [+1] DMG to Character Plays that cause damage and Playbook damage results. Enemy models within this aura suffer [-1] ARM.

Ox, MASTER BUTCHER BUTCHER'S GUILD TEAM CAPTAIN

The Ox is a pragmatist. You've got to be, Captain of a team where the only unifying factor is that in any way or another, the players are there because they like to hurt people. Such an individual needs to know how to get the most out of what they do best, because it's definitely not playing Guild Ball with a ball at their feet.

The Ox rules his team with an iron fist and has built them into a dependable, unified crew. No matter how much any of them might mouth off, not one ever has the stones to step over the line. The Master Butcher enforces obedience and his team know enough to show him respect. He wouldn't have it any other way. Ox is not above using intimidation or fear to control his own team, as well as a tool against their rivals.

But Ox is good at what he does too. Tough as nails, as capable of gutting a man as he is of talking to him. Tall, imposing, strong, a solid powerhouse that strikes terror into the hearts of the opposing team and their fans all the same. Originally a freelance mercenary, the Master Butcher has been a soldier for the Butcher's Guild for a long time. His career in Guild Ball is littered with mutilated victims and the bodies of opposition players and it is rumoured that before becoming a player, he held a contract with the Butcher's Guild for when more direct methods of persuasion were required.

Ox has never been one for asking questions, just getting the job done in as efficient an order as can be, his preferred method running to brutality foremost. If ever there has been a player more suited to the guild, chances are the Ox already got to them before they could make a name for themselves.

The Master Butcher knows that Guild Ball isn't all about the scoreline, informed by years of experience. The Butcher's Guild has a reasonable performance record on the field, but in the game's shadowy underworld, a considerably greater reputation. The Butchers are one of the oldest and most prolific Guilds, with a lot of enemies and a considerable number of interests that must be protected. Many is the time that the Butchers have taken to the field and demolished the opposition without even touching the ball to fulfil some old vendetta, or wasted a key player at the behest of their guild. Other teams are always wary in playing Ox's team, for this brutality is where his ruthless hand is at its best.

Ultimately though, Ox knows that everyone is just an obstacle to his own, real goal, the guilds be damned. After years of bloody war and of barely controlled violence on the pitch, the Master Butcher is tired of all this shit and just wants to make his money and retire. And the only way he's going to survive to do that is to be the best he can be.

PRINCESS, ROAMING TERROR BUTCHER'S GUILD TEAM MASCOT

No one quite knows where Princess is from. At some point, one of the past Butcher players brought her along to games; whoever it was is no longer with the Butchers Guild. Such a life as is offered to a player as in a game as ruthless as Guild Ball. In a guild like the Butcher's, even less effort is spent in remembering past players that didn't make the pack. Not one of them likely remembers the player's name; just that he or she got wasted and was replaced. But Princess remained.

Princess

Raed, Animal, Mascot

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

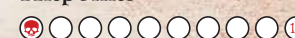
Loved Creature
When this model suffers the taken-out condition as the result of an enemy Attack or play, the friendly team gains [2] MP and for the remainder of the turn friendly models gain [+2] TAC. [+2" / +2"] MOV.

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6/8" 4 1/4" 4+ 1 1/2

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays

Blood: P
Target enemy model suffers the bleed condition.

Rabid Animal: P Yes
Target enemy model suffers [-4" / -4"] MOV and the poison condition.



Boar
Skaldic, Human, Male, Melee Zone - 2"
Attacking Midfielder Size - 40mm

MOV 4"/6" TAC 8 KICK 1/6" DEF 2+ ARM 0 INF 1/1

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Hamstring: P Yes
Target enemy model suffers [-4"/-4"] MOV.

Concussion: P
Target enemy model loses [1] Influence.

Character Traits

Berserk
During its activation, if this model damages an enemy model this turn, it may make an additional Attack without spending Influence. This ability cannot generate a further Attack from itself.

Furious
This model may Charge without spending Influence.

Regenerate
At the start of the Maintenance Phase, before conditions are resolved, this model may recover [2] HP.



BOAR THE BEAST

You can tell that the Boar is mad. It's in the deranged bastard's eyes and that grin. You hear everyone mouth off about how mean their big guy is, about how he's unstoppable and how he's going to waste anyone in front of him. The Butchers don't do that. They don't need to. Everyone is already scared of the monster that is Boar. I think half of the Butchers don't care to draw his attention to them much neither. When his blood is up, I don't think he much cares who you are, friend or foe.

I mean, how could you have such a player on the squad? Someone so self destructive? The Butchers don't seem to mind. It's because they know how to lead him into what he does best; just aim him at the opposition and watch him go. Who gives a shit about whether the man can string a sentence together without foaming at the mouth, when he's busy crippling some poor bastard too stupid to know to just run away when he saw him coming?

- Flint, Mason's Guild Vice Captain

Boar knows that they say these things. He knows that anyone he's ever shared the pitch with avoids him and after games, how only the Ox wants anything to do with him. He respects the man for that, knows that the Master Butcher is a hard man in his own right, worthy of Boar's loyalty; or as much as he has, anyway. But for the rest, Boar doesn't give two shits what they think.

Boar doesn't even really care about Guild Ball. If Boar didn't play Guild Ball, then he'd have been executed long since for murder, or killed fighting in some far off place, under a flag he couldn't care less about. The crowds might roar his name, cheer when he does it in front of them, but few dare to entertain the real truth for it is too dark to consider. Guild Ball gives Boar a legitimate reason to do what he does best, what he lives for. The thrill of spilling blood, of when you feel your fists smash into someone's face, the savage glee of wringing the life out of a man by his throat and the look on their face when they see their fate come upon them. Brutal and vicious violence drive the Boar and nothing else.

Yes, Boar knows that he is mad too. And he doesn't care, as long he can carry on living his life one bloody victim after another.

SHANK MASTER CUTTER

Shank
Erskirri, Human, Male, Winger Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV 5"/8" TAC 6 KICK 2/6" DEF 4+ ARM 0 INF 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Where'd They Go! 1 / S
This model may make a [4"] Dodge. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Thousand Cuts: 3 / 6" Yes
Target enemy model suffers [-2] DEF and [1] DMG.

Character Traits

Damaged Target
When this model performs a Charge against a damaged enemy model, it gains [+0"/+2"] MOV.

Shank edged around the building, his ears pricked, listening for any sound. Far off, he could hear the murmurs of the crowd, of the faint ring of steel on steel. Overhead, birds squawked nonsensically at each other. He drew his favourite stiletto knife, the one that had done the Spook from the Mortician's Guild last game.

Slowly, with each foot carefully balanced, each step calculated to make no sound, he crept to the corner, took a deep breath and then snuck a quick look. He flattened his body back almost immediately. His prey was mere inches away from him. Nostrils flaring, grinning, in one swift moment, he stepped out, arm reaching forward, past the man's gut and then the knife stabbing back in to his mark. His other hand reached around, snaking over the victim's mouth. A gasp and a shudder and Shank pulled the knife clear and stabbed again, and again, and again. Frenetic struggling now, blood gushed between his fingers, made the grip on the marks mouth slippery and the Cutter's hand slid away. A strangled sob escaped his target's lips and Shank swore as he pulled the body back into the shadows. Breathing quick, shallow breaths, he listened to see whether he had alerted anyone.

He looked around him, but couldn't hear anything. He darted back the way he had come, into a side street, heels skidding on the gravel and making a fine dirt mist. One down, five more to go.

Shank started out in life in an inner city slum with few more enticing prospects than joining one of the many dangerous gangs there and a violent death. He was a street rat with no education or money; his only possessions the pride that came from enforcing respect in his peers by violence and a dangerous talent with his knives.

Shank is a man with a dark past. You could call him a common thug, a thief, a murderer and more and still yet fall short. Shank has forgotten all of the names he's been called, the same way he couldn't tell you all of the names of his victims. The Master Cutter is gutter scum and he doesn't care. To Shank, a Guild Ball team is essentially a gang, on a much larger scale and that pays much better. What else is there?



TEAMS



Brisket
Skaldic, Human,
Female, Striker

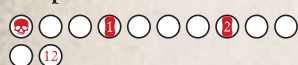
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 4 3/8" 4+ 1 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Super Shot: 1 S Yes
This model gains [+1/+2"] KICK.

Dirty Knives: 2 / 6" Yes

Target enemy model suffers [-2] DEF, [1] DMG and the poison condition.

Character Traits

Unpredictable Movement

Once per turn, when an enemy model ends an Advance in this model's melee zone, this model may immediately make a [2"] Dodge.

Charmed [Male]

This model gains [+1] DEF against every Attack and Character Play made by the named model type.

Attack Support [Princess]

While within [4"] of the named model, this model gains [+2] TAC.

BRISKET

LOVABLE MEAT

One of the game's few second generation stars, Brisket was always going to be a Butcher, right from birth. Her mother was a low ranking official at the guild, and her father a highly regarded Guild Ball player, a relationship not entirely approved by either the guild or the Guild Ball team itself. Whilst her parents might well have walked a fine line of condemnation and grudging acceptance, Brisket has always been a welcome member of both bodies. Even a man as bluntly unaffectionate as the Ox grudgingly regards her as a 'good girl' and one of his boys and she is a huge hit with the fans; most of whom would sell their own family for the chance to spend any time with her.

Touted as one of the most desirable players in Guild Ball history, for many, the juxtaposition of such a comely woman on such a savage team seems entirely at odds; until they spend any time with her. Stubborn, hard, cantankerous and spiteful, no one crosses Brisket and lives to tell the tale. Quite to the contrary of what one might expect, this low cunning and her vicious nature doesn't seem to play as detrimental with anyone.

Harsh though she may be and as unconcerned with the rules as any other Butcher's Guild player, Brisket has the unique place in the team that she represents the only individual that actually cares to play Guild Ball the traditional way, by scoring goals instead of simply brutally bludgeoning her path to victory. The guilds highest goal-scorer for decades now, she attracts more attention from the opposition with each match, the most foolish of whom likely see her as a soft touch compared to the other members of the squad.

This hasn't gone unnoticed by her team-mates, but if some of them consider her as the weakest link in their line up, it doesn't show in the way that they treat her, always one of the pack. Brisket is one of the gang, as much as the Boar or Shank. Fortunately for her, Brisket rarely lacks protection on or off the field; for a team with as indebted a fraternity to each other as the Butchers, to mess with one of them is to pick a fight with all of them.

And no one wants to bring that pain down on their heads.

MEATHOOK

WINTERS FURY

With that thick accent and tan, she's probably from out near Erskirad. Makes sense. Everyone from out that way are tough mothers, have to be with the long, cold winters and hard life. Look at everyone else with a sneer on their face, like they're all just soft southerners. It must be our fault that our fathers and their fathers before them saw that there was no sense in settling in a place as inhospitable as where the Erskirii call home I guess.

But she's got that vindictive streak in her all right. That, and a downright vicious one as well. When she sinks into you with those barbed hooks of hers, she fixes you with a look that would turn most men cold. I remember that there was a lad a few seasons back who tried to hold her up on a drive, she gut the poor bastard inside of two seconds and left him tryin' to push his tripes back in, stop 'em all spilling out all over the floor. He lived to tell the tale to his bunkmates of course. She knows her trade, was careful to not cut too much meat from the bone.

But the Winter's Fury is most dangerous because she's fast, like none of the other Meatheads. The rest of them you can try your best to avoid, dodge around and keep at arm's length. Not this one. You get close to their goal and she blows in like the north wind, a swirling dervish of wild, bloody mist and bad intentions. If you're not careful she'll either finish you off quickly and move on to your shipmates, or one of the others will catch up... and then, you're going to end up shipwrecked, mark my words.

I don't know why she plays in all honesty, or how she got into the game. Could be she just saw her chance to get out of that blasted tundra that she calls the motherland, could be that she's just good at what she does. I tell you for a fact lad that she enjoys it too much, like all of the Butchers. Yes, she's in the right guild that one.

But she'd better be careful. Delicate little thing really and for all that she's dangerous, I know that she's caught the eye of plenty of the big boys in this game who won't go down so easily as rooks and the other girls. You watch if one of those big ol' Spooks or the Monster manages to lay hands on her. She's not always going to be safe with back up from the others in her guild and one day they won't always be there for her when she picks at a bit of meat too big for her to handle on her own. Yes, she'll have to keep being very careful with her targets, or one day, she'll regret picking on the wrong prey.

- Greyscales, Fisherman's Guild Vice Captain

Meathook
Erskirii, Human,
Female, Attacking Midfielder

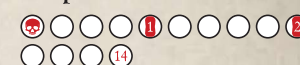
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 6 3/6" 4+ 0 1/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Scything Blow: P Yes

All models within this model's melee zone suffer [3] DMG.

Tooled Up: 1 4" Yes

Target friendly model gains [+1] DMG to Character Plays that cause damage and Playbook damage results. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Character Traits

Smell Blood

This model gains [+0"/+2"] MOV when it performs a Charge against an enemy model suffering the bleed condition. When this model makes an Attack against an enemy model suffering the bleed condition, it gains [+1] DMG to Playbook damage results against that model.

Crucial Artery

Enemy models suffer the bleed condition when damaged by this model.

Heroic Play

Sanguine Pool [3" Pulse]

Enemy models that are suffering conditions and are within the pulse suffer [-4"/-4"] MOV and [1] DMG.



Boiler

Ethraynnian, Human,
Male, Winger

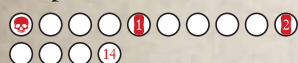
Melee Zone + 1"
Size + 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 5 2/6" 4+ 1 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Swift Stancer: 2 4" - Yes

Target friendly model gains [+1] DEF.

Marked Targets: 1 / 8" - Yes

Friendly models who declare a Charge against the affected enemy model gain [+0"/+2"] MOV. This Character Play can only be used once per turn.

Character Traits

Anatomical Precision

During an Attack from this model, enemy models suffer [-1] ARM.

Crucial Artery

When damaged by this model, enemy models suffer the bleed condition.

Assist [Princess]

When making an Attack against an enemy model engaged by the named model, this model gains [+1] TAC and [+1] DMG to Character Plays that cause damage and Playbook damage results.



BOILER APPRENTICE

Boiler looked down at his hands, covered in blood.

Someone else's blood. He couldn't for the life of him work out how he got this way. Last thing he knew, he was running for his mark like the Ox told him, breaking away from the pack. There had been a blurry flash, a horrific ripping noise and then that next sound; like a when you dropped a slab of meat onto a stone tile. A cold, dead, fleshy thud.

The Butcher suddenly realised he didn't have his knife to hand any more. Panicking, he scrambled up off his back and onto his knees, wild eyes staring around him. He was new and didn't know much about Guild Ball, but what he did know was that if he didn't have his weapon, he was as good as dead. He found his knife, the hilt protruding from the corpse's chest. That hadn't killed him though, as much as he had driven it into where the dead man's heart should be. What had killed the man was that Princess had torn out his throat. She'd run on now, looking for a fresh victim.

The apprentice quickly approached the body, still aware of his vulnerability to reprisal and braced his foot against it. With a sharp twist, he pulled the knife clear, an arterial spray arcing up with it and splattering across the grass next to him. It tumbled over onto its front and he heard the crowds roar. A huge shadow fell over him. He darted left, turning mid stride, knife poised to throw at this new target until he heard the deep, throaty laughter.

The Ox looked at him, his lips pursed in as much thought as the bigger man ever chose to entertain.

'You're dirty scum, Boiler. I saw the mutt bring him down and you had to finish the job yourself, didn't you?' His thick drawl made him sound curiously affectionate, which you could never think if you caught the hard look in his eyes. Boiler started to speak, stammered, and then gave up the job.

'Actions speak louder than words eh? I can appreciate that about you kid. I'm glad you're on my side, you're cold as one of those Mortician Spooks. Now go find the animal and a new mark.'



TEAMS



THE FISHERMAN'S GUILD



The Fisherman's Guild is not a new guild and their team has been around for years in the lower divisions. They just never seemed to have a great game, you know? You ask anyone in the know about Guild Ball whether they ever heard of them back in the day and I can already tell you they're going to say no. Then one day, the Fisherman's Guild has a real revival in fortunes. Something to do with the nobles suddenly developing a taste for sea food and some shady deal with another guild. All I know is that that suddenly they have guild houses springing up in every city that doesn't already have one and that everyone is going on about them.

And then the team got better. A lot better. Like crazy better. Beating the Butchers, the Morticians, the Alchemists and the Messengers; all of the big boys. Had to get better, once the guild got bigger, or it wouldn't sit right, you know? Whole bunch of new players, new sponsorship, new gear, new playbook. Suddenly, they're a name on the street, with a big following. People screaming at the top of their voices when they play, flocking to the grounds. Yeah, they became the team to beat overnight. Everyone knows who they are now. Pictures of them all over, they're a real big item.

But you know what the old timers all say about the poster boys and girls? That team could probably achieve even more greatness if they could just wise up. Pathetic how they all swoon over each other. One great big happy family. Only one of 'em got any idea how dangerous it is to make friends in this game, or that sometimes it ain't about winning, it's about doing what your guild wants. Instead, they all run around waving to the damned crowd, showboating with the ball, all touchy feely with each other whenever one of 'em gets knocked on their arse. Never known another team like it.

You wonder whether none of them ever seen someone they know get wasted in front of them like the rest of us.

Everyone else gets it. You think they would with the amount of rooks they go through. On this team, career life expectancy ain't high, you get me? Guess being the games top team does that to you though, gives you blinkers. I'll be fair to them, half the time the rooks that don't get dead don't make the clique. All teams are tight, but not like this one.

You don't have the right attitude, the right moves? Don't make a big impact in your first couple of games? You're out. When you're at the top, you've got the pick of the bunch, those desperate for it. The ones that want to stand out there, like gods to everyone else, plenty hungry to join up with them, even if most of 'em go home in wooden boxes. I suppose that the chance to join the damned team gives the rooks blinkers too.

But damn, they can play. If you're good enough to be on the team, then you're doing well. No dead weight there. They're the best right now for a reason. They've never had a better line up in their entire history than they have at the moment. Yeah, I know that they're new considering how long some of the other guilds teams have been in the limelight, but that don't stop it being the truth none, does it? Ain't no other team that can catch 'em and until someone seriously gets their game on, the Fisherman's Guild are going to keep winning.

- Flint, Mason's Guild Team Vice Captain

JAC

ANGEL

SHARK

THE SIREN

GREYSCALES

KRAKEN

SALT



TEAMS



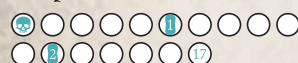
Shark
Eisnoran, Human, Male,
Captain, Striker

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
7/9 6 4/8 4+ 1 4/6

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays

Quick Foot:

Target friendly model gains [+2"/+2"] MOV.

Gut & String:

Target enemy model suffers [-4"/-4"] MOV and [-1] DEF.

Tidal Surge:

Target model may make a [4"] Dodge. If target model is an enemy model, it counts as a friendly model during this action. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

Light Footed
This model ignores the movement penalty while moving through rough-ground.

Legendary Play

Caught in a Net
[8" Pulse]
Enemy models within the pulse suffer [-4"/-4"] MOV.

SHARK, FANG OF THE SEA FISHERMAN'S GUILD TEAM CAPTAIN

Hailing from Eisnor, far to the northern fringes of the Empire of the Free Cities, the man that they call the Fang of the Sea is an atypical Fisherman's Guild player. A loner by nature, Shark is adept at patiently hunting his prey, a calm and deadly predator. In a team like the Fisherman side, with their emphasis on playmakers over the brutal stalkers found more commonly on the other more physical teams, he is the only one of his kind. This interests Shark little, in the same sense that he doesn't acknowledge that people whisper that he might be one of the hottest talents in the game right now. Shark is not in the game to feed his ego.

Unusual maybe, but not when considering his relatively new promotion to the captaincy; one that is a product of internal politicking within the Fisherman's Guild more than anything else.

Shark feels the heavy weight of responsibility of being captain upon him and is far more interested in the guild's success than his own personal glory. His background is of being part of a tight knit crew and long experience has taught him that the extent of what a dedicated and focused team can achieve is far beyond that of the individual.

It is ironic then that he is far more suited to playing alone and away from the others than with them in a directly supportive capacity. A blunt man feeling acutely isolated from his team-mates, undoubtedly the most significant barrier to his sense of inclusion is his ethnicity and the inevitable language barrier between him and the rest of the squad. Being unable to communicate with his peers as easily or fluently as his position demands, his orders are curt, clipped, practised and to the other players' ears, tired clichés which are occasionally entirely ignored.

It is fortuitous then that the presence of Greyscales goes some way to alleviating this situation, the Vice-Captain being able to offer his wealth of knowledge to the players when Shark's less than inspiring oratory falls flat. A less composed man in the position of captaincy might feel threatened by this, but for the Fang of the Sea, the synergy is foremost a cause for relief.

Greyscales effectively makes up for the gaps in Shark's own leadership and nods thoughtfully when Shark confides in the elder that the captain's badge is one that he is unsure that he even wants at all. In spite of this, the wily veteran sincerely hopes to build Shark, the brutal player that is often more like a Butcher than a Fisherman, into the captain that he knows his team needs.



SALT, THE RASCAL FISHERMAN'S GUILD TEAM MASCOT

The Fisherman's Guild doesn't have a strong history of bringing animals to their games, summed up once by Greyscales as the creatures 'having no sea legs'. But the current mascot proves the exception to that, treated with great affection by the rest of the team and fans alike. Although usually found skulking around Angel, Salt has been known as a familiar shadow to all of the Fisherman's Guild and is about the only player on the squad that Shark seems to tolerate for any duration. In private, some of the Fisherman's Guild suspect that this is presumably because he doesn't have to talk to it.

Unlike some of the other animals dragged into Guild Ball, Salt isn't a savage or bloodthirsty creature with a taste for carnage like Princess, nor a constant annoyance like the birds employed by the Mortician's Guild. Salt harasses the opposition as they approach and then bites at their heels once a player like Shark is on them, or skulks off once Angel has made her escape too.

Salt

Eisnoran, Animal, Mascot

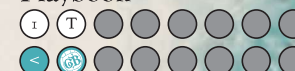
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

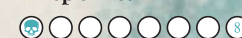
Loved Creature
When this model suffers the taken-out condition as the result of an enemy Attack or play, the friendly team gains [2] MP and for the remainder of the turn friendly models gain [+2] TAC, [+2"]/+2"] MOV.

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
7/9 2 1/4 5+ 0 1/3

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays

Where'd They Go?:

This model may make a [4"] Dodge. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

1 / 5



Greyscales

Pigeon, Human,
Male, Winger

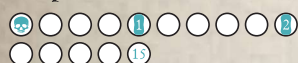
Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5"/4" 5 3/6" 4+ 0 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Decoy: I S Yes

This model gains [+2] DEF against the next enemy Attack.

Where'd They Go? 1 / S

This model may make a [4"] Dodge. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Ball's Gone! 6 P

Tackle the target enemy model. The ball-token may then be placed in possession of a friendly model within [4"].

Character Traits

Unpredictable Movement

Once per turn, when an enemy model ends an Advance in this models melee zone, this model may immediately make a [2"] Dodge.



GREYSCALES ELDER FISHERMAN

Greyscales? He's as old as the game itself, I swear. Can't ever remember a time when we didn't see him on the pitch. He's been the driving force behind his team for years now. Probably the most popular player that the game has, even got some friends in other guilds I think. Tough to not respect a guy with that much history behind him.

The fans love him. You should hear them roar when he runs out there onto the pitch, louder even than it is for the show boaters that shake their arses like Brisket and Harmony. Ain't never been no time it was ever different either. The Fisherman's Guild might not always have been the best team out there, but you can always guarantee that thanks to him they get the biggest crowd.

That's pretty important in this game. A big game means big money for someone and if anyone knows how to make sure they make money, it's a guild. Word has it that even in the games they don't win, he's made the Fisherman's Guild a pretty penny more than the winners thanks to admission fees alone.

You think that would make him a target, but you've gotta catch him first. Like an eel in the reeds that one, the wily bastard. You see a brute like Boar come up behind him, hands poised to grab him by the throat, blink and suddenly Greyscales is gone, leaves them all in the dust.

Never been Captain though, could never work that out. I guess he don't score very often and he's not big on wasting other players. P'haps he just loves the game so much he don't care none if he makes the big time or not. He's been the first mate for so long, it's like he's the unofficial captain anyways. I heard he's been offered retirement a couple of times now and refused it. Can you imagine? A Guild Ball player gets to be around for long enough to retire, gets offered his due and a happy ever after and then decides he wants to keep putting his neck on the line time after time?

Gotta be something keeping him going. Yeah, I reckon he just wants to be a part of this game more than anything. And I guess if you're Greyscales, what are you going to do if you haven't got new bloods to look after, haven't got someone waiting on you to teach them how to survive out there? Don't suppose a quiet life would interest you much after all.

Still, I think he's spent one too many nights out at sea for not taking the easy way out now he's earned his dues. That's gotta be a first in this crazy game.

- Brick, Mason's Guild

THE SIREN ALLURE OF THE SEA

Almost ethereal, the Siren seemed insubstantial to Graves' eyes as she danced just out of his reach. It seemed every time that he reached for her, she danced away, predicting his every feint and dodge. Each step closer became a step further away again. He could have sworn he heard the bitch laughing, the gentle sound in the air around him, infuriatingly fey. For a moment he lost track of her somehow, had this day always been so accursedly misty? He didn't think so. Where was she?

There.

Graves ran towards her silhouette, the laughter louder in his ears now. He pulled his favourite skinning knife from his smock. He would see whether it would stop the accursed sound. He would enjoy hearing that merriment become a strangled sob as he softly parted the skin of her delicate throat and watched it bubble from her mouth as a fine red foam. Yes, she would pay for making him chase her.

Did he always think so emotively? Some part of his scientific mind rebelled against the thought, a quiet voice against the overwhelming sound of Siren's mirth. Graves slowed to a halt. The mist surrounding him abated, as did his mind clear of the desperate anger.

Siren was nowhere to be seen.

Distant and aloof, the Siren is a mystery to all. Rumours abound as to where she came from, how she came to join the Fisherman's Guild and why she plays Guild Ball. The most commonly held understanding is that one day the pair of Siren and Kraken simply walked into the Fisherman's guild house in Boujonte and demanded to join the roster. Another is that Greyscales and Corsair found her out at sea, in a ghostly abandoned shipwreck. There are many more, ranging from the fantastic to the utterly mundane, commonplace to the surreal. Even her team-mates know little about the Allure of the Sea, leading some to mistrust her concealed nature.

Still, the Fisherman side have come to rely upon her ability to lure the opposition players out of position rather than to beating them into submission like a common thug. Once her crew have taken advantage, Siren almost fades away, only to appear back in the game once again some distance from danger. It is an old magic trick in a new age which refuses to become obsolete.

One day perhaps more will be known about the enigmatic pair and their intentions, but until then, all eyes are upon those which stare out dispassionately from within her hood.

Siren

Unknown, Human,
Female, Winger

Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
7"/5" 3 3/6" 4+ 0 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Lure: 2 8"

Target enemy model immediately moves its base-move directly towards this model. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Seduced: 3 / 6"

Target enemy model either makes a Pass or Attack without spending Influence. The target model counts as a friendly model during this action.

Character Traits

Beautiful

Enemy Character Plays directly targeting this model suffer [-5"] RNG.

Charmed [Male]

This model gains [+1] DEF against every Attack and Character Play made by the named model type.

Protected [Kraken]

While within [4"] of the named model, this Character Plays model gains [+1] ARM.



TEAMS



Kraken
Unknown, Human,
Male, Centre Back

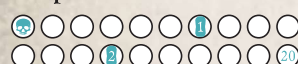
Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 40mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
4"/6" 5 1/6" 2+ 1 1/3

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Harpoon: 2 / 6"

Target enemy model suffers a [6"] Push directly towards this model.

Release the...: 6" P

Target enemy model suffers a [6"] Push directly away from this model, the knocked-down condition and [3] DMG.

Character Traits

Tough Hide
Enemy Plays that cause damage or Playbook damage results targeting this model are reduced by [-1] DMG.

KRAKEN DEEP POWER

Kraken jogged alongside Angel, his long loping strides that propelled him forward as fast as her legs carried her at full sprint. He barely ever spoke. Always instead with that kindly, gentle smile and look, completely at odds with his size, dwarfing everyone around him. Angel was always struck by a sense of gentleness about him for some reason she could never quite reconcile. That and how much physical power emanated from the man. It was almost impossible to see past that. When the other teams tried to bring him down, he always seemed an immovable object, like a cliff facing down the waves crashing against it. Then, like a mighty creature of myth, he would smite them aside with one giant swipe of a heavily tattooed arm.

Her breath was torn out of her as he barrelled into her sideways, sending her sprawling. Winded, gasping, she rolled over, trying to desperately draw air into burning lungs. Through blurry eyes she could see Kraken wrestling with another figure. Angel tried to stand, to get to her feet, but fell to one knee. She waited for the blade from a second assailant to end this as she helplessly tried to use her hands to push herself up.

It was a hand attached to strong forearm that grasped her wrist and pulled her to her unsteady feet. She found herself looking into the eyes of Siren, impossibly blue, piercing her from underneath that hood, with no clue of anything that their owner might be feeling. Angel backed up a cough and just about recovered in time to see Siren turn and nod to Kraken, standing stoically a few paces away, an unconscious assailant now at his feet.

A sensation, which Angel never could shake whilst around the pair, was that of being impossibly and uncomfortably awkward. Neither ever seemed to speak to the other, yet you quickly felt like you were out of place, an intruder to something primal, some ethereal connection. Whatever it was, the feeling was a complete mystery.

Now was not the time to waste on considering that though. They were already in front and there was a game to win. Quickly, Angel turned and ran up the pitch, looking for the pass to Greyscales.

JAC THE BRAWLER

Jac? Good ol' boy that one, bardy and reliable, with a bit of a mean streak. Real sense of loyalty too, knows what it is to look out for his shipmates. I can't tell you how many times I've seen him pull some rook out of the deep end during a match.

Not afraid to dive right into the action neither and by the Lords of the Deep, I've seen him take a beating from most of the big lads in this game because of it. He doesn't let that slow him up none though. Real tough lad, no matter how hard he gets hit, just shrugs it off like water on a mermaid's back.

But don't let that make you think he's out there taking a beating each week and not much else. Trust me, this one is a real knockdown, drag out bruiser. No quarter given and none expected, he's not going to pull his punches for anyone. He'll fight you clean but he'll get his hands dirty if he has to, whatever it takes to get the job done. I've seen him throw down with three or four dock workers all at the same time in some run down drinking hole and barely break a sweat. How many of you pretty boys can say that, eh?

Stems from his upbringing. You wouldn't know it to look at him, but our boy Jac is from Butcher stock. Explains why he likes to talk with his fists, eh? Way he tells it wasn't too happy a childhood. Never fit in with the Meatbeads none too well, even his own kin. Then days after he comes of age, an Impressment Crew grabs him, drags him off to work below decks and dockyards in the Century Wars, solves the problem for him. Spent the next few years learning his trade under fire, in the Old Skaldic Navy. By the time the Wars ended, Jac was as much one of us as you or I young blood, probably more so.

When I met him, he'd got himself on The Achatina, a merchantman sailing from Mullenbrecht and running out to Figo somewhere. He caught my eye during a brawl in the Drowning Man over this lass, flared up between his first mate and some cutthroat. Typical fight you've seen the world over, until the freebooter pulled a knife. Didn't stop Jac though, threw himself in the middle of the two straight away, got himself fair cut up doing it too.

Right then, I knew that we needed someone with that kind o' fearlessness on our side. Even more when I found out later that he didn't actually like his first mate, just did it out of a sense of allegiance more than anything.

- Greyscales, Fisherman's Guild Vice Captain

Jac
Skaldic, Human, Male,
Defensive Midfielder

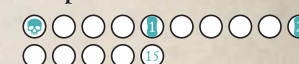
Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5"/8" 5 3/6" 3+ 1 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Ramming Speed: 1 S

During this model's Advance, any enemy model whose base is touched suffers a [2"] Push directly away. A model can only be affected by this Character Play once per turn.

Goad: 1 6" Yes

While this model is on the Pitch, the target enemy model can only move directly towards this model during its Advance. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Character Traits

Resolute
This model gains [+2] TAC when making a Counter-Attack.

Get Over Here! [Self]
During this model's activation, if named model is within [10"] of this model, the named model may make a Dodge up to its basemove directly towards this model.

Tough Hide
Enemy Plays that cause damage or Playbook damage results targeting this model are reduced by [-1] DMG.

Heroic Play

Trident Tested [3" Pulse]
Enemy models within the pulse suffer a [4"] Push directly away from this model.



Angel

Pigeon, Human,
Female, Striker

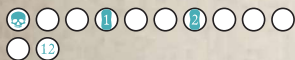
Melee Zone: 1"
Size: 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6 7/8" 4 4/8" 4+ 0 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Super Shot: I S - Yes

This model gains [+1/+2"] KICK.

Nimble: I S - Yes

This model gains [+1] DEF.

Character Traits

Light Footed

This model ignores the movement penalty while moving through rough-ground.

Tactical Advice [Shark]

During the Maintenance Phase, if the named model is within [4"], this model gains [+1/+1] INF.

Defence Support [Salt]

While within [4"] of the named model, this model gains [+1] DEF.



ANGEL THE SEAS BEAUTY

She's a real sweet lass that one. Pretty little thing, all doe eyed and nervous grins. Hasn't been around very long and gets on with everyone already. I reckon half the team has a soft spot for her, as well as the people that come to see us every week.

Tessir, she fits right in like a fish in the sea. You'd think a kid like that is too innocent for a violent, brutal and downright vicious game like this one eh? P'haps.

I've seen enough players to know when someone special comes along though, and Angel? You mark my words lad, she's going to be the biggest star in the history of the game one day. You can forget your Shanks and Boars, all those Meatheads that are only muscle; won't even remember the real creative ones like Honour or Spigot either. Hells, people will even think her name before they mention ol' Greyscales. Never going to be able to say Fisherman's Guild without her name in there somewhere.

Teab, I know, big talk for a rook still wet behind the ears. But I got me a feelin' about this one. A real good feelin'. Helps she's already this season's top scorer, don't it? You watch boy, that won't change for a long time; no matter how much Harmony pouts, or the Butchers beat up so many people, or ol' Brisket gets another bat trick. Yep, this girl comes in and in less than a season already puts her mark on the map. I hear from the ol' crow's nest that other guilds have put out a bounty on her head already. But don't you worry none boy, we ain't about to let her get wasted any time soon. If you're going to learn one thing about this guild, it's that we look after each other around here, not like those Spooks or Meatheads.

Oh, so you want to know more about her now eh? He, I can see that look in your eye young blood, I can tell what you want to know. Word to the wise there, she won't be interested in you. She's got her eye on a much bigger, more impressive catch, a predator himself. I don't think he cares for it, but if she does net him one day then that's a haul you won't want to throw down with.

So you'd be advised just leave her to get on with what she does best, and that's winning us games.

- Greyscales, Fisherman's Guild Vice Captain



TEAMS



THE BREWER'S GUILD

Real rough and tumble boys, these lads. You're never going to meet yourself anyone more likely to knock you down into the dirt, mark my words. Tough, thick skulled bastards that love to brawl. But you know? For all of that, they're all right by me. They're just playing the game and they don't take liberties with it none. I'll go ten matches with the Drunks over one with the Meatheads or the Spooks, bruises and all. Play against 'em one day, and you'll see what I mean. They're all aggressive and up in your face on the pitch and after will sit down to drink with you like you're old comrades.

Difficult to dislike someone like that. You see Brick and Mallet over there? They're both firm friends with most of 'em. I know most of the guilds don't get along, on or off the pitch, but neither of those two lads would bear a bad word said about any of the Drunks. Boss don't like it much, but even she can't complain; neither team gives anything away when we play each other. Some of the times I've seen Brick take the worst beatings have been at the hands of these boys. He just gets up afterwards, smiles and shakes their hand. Me? I could never understand two words that they say in a row, thanks to that thick accent they all have. Might be why I've never become friends with any of them.

But theirs is a weird guild, mark my words. No other like it for how much it changes so dramatically every so often. It's all to do with their history. All guilds have different houses and different families that fight each other for which gets to be the master architect and the Brewer's Guild is no exception. The part that makes them different to the rest is how each of the houses are so different to each other and what it is they push.

Take your Delenni Brewer's for example, all about their sugary spirits, big with the nobles. Think they get on with the boys down in Gbalsch, where they make that thick stout that would make a billygoat puke? And neither of 'em mucks in with the Brewer families from the north and that sharp, cold spirit the Erskirii drink. It's all a matter of perspective really. Makes sense when you think about it that much.

So rumour is that the Brewer's Guild fight amongst themselves all the time. Not like our boys, where it's all secrets and behind the scenes allegiances, I mean good old fashioned gang warfare. Each of the houses keeps the others in line by threat of violence and when they see that they can step in on another houses' turf, they'll do it. Then every so often, when the house in the lead gets toppled and a new one takes over? Everything changes, including the Guild Ball team. Different sponsorship of different players. Some of 'em stay around for a few seasons, but sooner or later they fade away, outsiders in their own team. No one asks what happens to them then. I doubt that they're given a drink and let retire though. Spigot's about the only one that seems to have been around for very long.

The current Drunks are nearly all from over Raedland way, around Maldriven and beyond. Considering how hard some of their predecessors have been, they're a fun bunch. Decent in their own way. You wouldn't remember, but before them was the lot from Erskirad. Far too serious for their own good, like their ale had grown stale long since. No one was sad to see the back of them. Let's just hope that the Maldriven Whiskey houses keep their hold over the Brewer's Guild for a long time to come, eh?

• Flint, Mason's Guild Team Vice Captain

STAVE

STOKER

HOOPER

TAPPER

SPIGGOT

FRIDAY

SCUM



TEAMS



Tapper
Mald, Human, Male,
Captain, Central Fielder

Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

Tactical Advice
[Scum]
During the Maintenance Phase, if the named model is within [4"], this model gains [+1/+1] INF.

Tough Hide
Enemy Plays that cause damage or Playbook damage results targeting this model are reduced by [-1] DMG.

Legendary Play

Old Jake's
This model may immediately allocate [2] Influence between friendly guild models within [4"].

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
4"/7" 6 3/6" 3+ 1 3/4

Playbook

⑥ ④ ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰ ⑱ ⑲ ⑳ ㉑ ㉒ ㉓ ㉔ ㉕ ㉖ ㉗ ㉘ ㉙ ㉚ ㉛ ㉜ ㉝ ㉞ ㉟ ㊱ ㊲ ㊳ ㊴ ㊵ ㊶ ㊷ ㊸ ㊹ ㊺ ㊻ ㊼ ㊽ ㊾ ㊿

Hitpoints

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰ ⑱ ⑲ ⑳ ㉑ ㉒ ㉓ ㉔ ㉕ ㉖ ㉗ ㉘ ㉙ ㉚ ㉛ ㉜ ㉝ ㉞ ㉟ ㊱ ㊲ ㊳ ㊴ ㊵ ㊶ ㊷ ㊸ ㊹ ㊺ ㊻ ㊼ ㊽ ㊾ ㊿

Character Plays

Marked Target:

Friendly models who declare a Charge against the affected enemy model gain [+0"/+2"] MOV. This Character Play can only be used once per turn.

Commanding Aura:

An Attack made against an enemy model within this aura gain [+1] TAC and [+1] DMG to their Playbook damage results.

COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

1 / ⑥ 8" - Yes

2 / ⑥ ④ S 4" Aura Yes



TAPPER, GRAND BREWER

BREWER'S GUILD TEAM CAPTAIN

Tapper sat on his barstool in the Drunken Seamstress and carefully raised the glass in his left hand to the light. The liquid inside was a rich, warm, orange-flecked copper. It had no bubbles and sat still. Under the harsh appraisal of the light, he could see thick veins of sugary swirls in the murk of the substance, sitting uncomfortably with the other elements. He gave it a firm but gentle shake with a practised wrist, to see how the fluid reacted to being moved around the vessel. It moved languidly, slowly like a thick syrup. He moved it to his nose, tucking it just underneath his thick moustache and gave it a careful sniff. Dry, and extremely musky. He inhaled deeply and immediately wished he hadn't as the powerful aroma invaded his nostrils, through his sinuses and left his mouth via a spluttery, rasping cough.

He knew what it was. The others could tell by the telltale raised eyebrow, once he regained his composure.

'Soburian Brandy,' he intoned in an almost reverent tone. 'Not tasted this vintage in many a year.' He upended the glass, pouring the drink into his mouth in a single, sharp action, his head tilted back.

As the alcohol ran across his tongue and down his throat, it left a pleasant fruit after-taste, a warmth that spread lower as the liquid travelled through his system. He closed his eyes as he heard a groan from someone in the room and awaited the real taste.

There it was, starting from low down in his gut and quickly travelling up, back towards his throat; the scathingly harsh burn that made the drink famous. He rode it like he remembered he had in his youth when he drank it previously; savouring the unique flavour the second time, the vicious taste like raw seeds dipped in sugar cane. After it was past, he opened his eyes.

'Definitely Soburian Brandy. Good vintage too, at least 30 years aged, oak casket.'

Spigot groaned again, and pushed a small handful of copper and silver coins across the bar top towards Stave, wearing a huge grin so wide it was evident even under the big man's bushy facial hair. Stave's massive hand closed over the money and ferreted it away somewhere within the large leather belt around his kilt.

'Thought I had you there boss,' Spigot muttered nervously.

'I knew. Always have faith in t'boss. You never caught him out yet.' Stave was chuckling.

'That cost me a fair pretty penny, I could've sworn...' They were interrupted as the heavy door swung open on creaking hinges and slammed into a chair near to the wall. Scum screeched and leapt onto a perch somewhere behind the bar.

'Guw!' Friday was frantic. 'Guw, it's them over in t' Sapper's Arms, got rowdy it did, ugly. Hooper's there, slotted one mook, but there was ten o' 'em. Sent me t' bring you all back.'

Tapper didn't hesitate.

'Load up lads!' He roared, delivering a heavy toe punt to the door and stepped across the threshold.

SCUM, THE UNWANTED

BREWER'S GUILD TEAM MASCOT

I'm not sure why they let that cat on the pitch. I think it just turns up whether they want it to or not to be honest. Doesn't do much. No one ever pays it any attention. P'haps it's just someone's lucky cat or something. Could be a stray for all I care.

Sure has a strange name for a cat though. Drunk's sense of humour maybe. Whole outfit's damned crazy, what's one more weird thing going to matter?

- Flint, Mason's Guild Vice Captain

Scum

Mald, Animal, Mascot

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

Shadow Like

At the start of this model's activation, it may make a [2"] Dodge.

Unpredictable Movement

Once per turn, when an enemy model ends an Advance in this models melee zone, this model may immediately make a [2"] Dodge.

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 4 1/4" 5+ 0 1/3

Playbook

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰ ⑱ ⑲ ⑳ ㉑ ㉒ ㉓ ㉔ ㉕ ㉖ ㉗ ㉘ ㉙ ㉚ ㉛ ㉜ ㉝ ㉞ ㉟ ㊱ ㊲ ㊳ ㊴ ㊵ ㊶ ㊷ ㊸ ㊹ ㊺ ㊻ ㊼ ㊽ ㊾ ㊿

Hitpoints

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰ ⑱ ⑲ ⑳ ㉑ ㉒ ㉓ ㉔ ㉕ ㉖ ㉗ ㉘ ㉙ ㉚ ㉛ ㉜ ㉝ ㉞ ㉟ ㊱ ㊲ ㊳ ㊴ ㊵ ㊶ ㊷ ㊸ ㊹ ㊺ ㊻ ㊼ ㊽ ㊾ ㊿

Character Plays

Hamstring:

Target enemy model suffers [-4"/-4"] MOV.

COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

⑥ P

Target enemy model suffers [-4"/-4"] MOV.



Hooper

Mald, Human, Male,
Attacking Midfielder

Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
4/7" 5 2/6" 3+ 1 2/3

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Tough Skin: 1 4" Yes

Target friendly model gains [+1] ARM. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Smashed Shins: 2 P Yes

Target enemy model suffers [-4/-4"] KICK.

Character Traits

Tough Hide

Enemy Plays that cause damage or Playbook damage results targeting this model are reduced by [-1] DMG.

Shove the Boot In

This model gains [+1] DMG to Playbook damage results against models suffering the knocked-down condition.

Heroic Play

True Grit

Immediately remove all conditions from this model. This model gains [+2] TAC.



HOOPER THE UNYIELDING SOLDIER

Fighting a drunken father as part of an undercity gang, in pub brawls, against authorities, Hooper has only known a life of hard knocks. Even escaping from the certainty of a miserable death at the end of a knife in a cell or pub somewhere and into the safety of a guild has still just meant that his life of bloody conflict will continue.

Hooper is the hard-core soldier of the Brewer's Guild, an unapologetically imposing and unrelenting man, who has never been known to back down from a fight in his entire life. Fearless, he stalks the pitches of Guild Ball itching for the next explosive confrontation. In rest periods he lives an existence of hard drinking, bar fights and whoring in the lower class establishments of the undercity.

His only real ambition is to be warlord of the Brewer's Guild; even that a hazy concept that he has never bothered to think through, only a primitive idea that as the strongest, most powerful warrior it is his right to lead. But for all of his other faults, Hooper is unflinchingly loyal to his guild, and a canny Tapper avoids this potential conflict well enough by loosening Hooper's leash enough to let him live with the abandon that he has become renown for, only reining him back in as needed.

For the rest of the Brewers, Hooper is a dependable ally, if a crass thug. For some, his direct and unambiguous nature is almost admirable. Such players know that in their Vice-Captain exists an unflinching warrior that will be at the forefront; leading any charge into the opposition. For the others, there is only confusion as to why Tapper would allow such a person to a position of any responsibility. Spigot, ever acerbic, is extremely critical of him in particular. If Hooper notices his disparaging remarks, he certainly seems not to show he cares much of them, the same as he doesn't appear to value the friendship of those more inclined to offer him fellowship.

Irrespective of what other people think, Hooper continues to exist as he always has and will likely do until the end of his days; from moment to moment, wasting little time on considering his past or future. Instead, he will continue to simply overcome all in front of him in the present. The rest will happen another day.

STAVE ARTILLERIST

A stream of smoke trailing lazily behind the explosive, the big man threw a monstrously large arm backwards behind him, holding it in place for a moment. Other arm held out in front of him and sniffing the wind, he paused for the briefest second before his nostrils flared; with a yell that travelled up through his massive frame the arm swung forward like a trebuchet, launching the barrel far into the air. His throw took him a step forward, boot mashing the grass beneath it into mush.

He looked at the much smaller man standing next to him. 'Might want to duck, little man.'

The barrel moved through the air as if by slow motion as it reached closer to the apex of its trajectory, before seeming to revert back to normal time and plummeting suddenly towards the opposition player, who looked up, dumbstruck. One second, then two seconds passed as the inevitable path of the barrel took it closer and closer still. Three seconds and it struck the ground as Stave saw the player dive to the left, probably far too late by the big Brewers reckoning.

A huge explosion shook the pitch, dirt showering up in the air, played around a dent in the world. Smoke rose from the crater. Stave could see the shadow of the Guild Ball player whom had lingered too long, lay in an awkward pile of limbs that didn't seem to possess any of the correct angles or have the shape that they should have. He grunted to Spigot, picking himself up from the ground.

'T'way is clear Spigs, I'll catch you up.'

An awestruck Spigot nodded and ran under the cover of the smoke as the wind cast it towards them both, ball skilfully dribbled out in front of him.

Stave started towards the prone unfortunate.

By the time he reached him, the apothecaries were already on hand. Stave watched dispassionately. He had expected the man to dive out of the way far sooner. Stupid Meathead had no common sense it seemed. He didn't care all that much. He'd seen a lot of death in his life. This was just another bag of bones now. As he watched, the chief Sawbones sat up on his haunches, and gestured a stretcher over.

Stave

Mald, Human, Male,
Centre Back

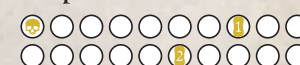
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 40mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
4/6" 6 1/6" 2+ 0 1/3

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Ramming Speed: 1 S

During this model's Advance this activation, any enemy model whose base is touched suffers a [2"] Push directly away. A model can only be affected by this Character Play once per turn.

Lob Barrel: 2 6" AOE3"

All models suffer a [4"] Push directly away from the centre of the AOE and the knocked-down condition. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Character Traits

Tough Hide

Enemy Plays that cause damage or Playbook damage results targeting this model are reduced by [-1] DMG.

Heroic Play

Explosive Brew

When this model uses the Lob Barrel Character Play this turn, enemy models suffer an additional [2] DMG.



TEAMS



Stoker

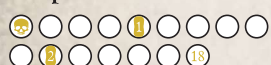
Eisnoran, Human, Melee Zone - 1"
Male, Defensive Midfielder Size - 30mm

MOV	TAC	KICK	DEF	ARM	INF
4/6"	5	3/6"	3+	2	1/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Molotov: 1 8" -
Target enemy model suffers the burning condition. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Burn the Floor: 2 6" - Yes
Choose a terrain piece. All models within the terrain piece automatically suffer the burning condition. All models entering or ending their activation within the terrain piece suffer the burning condition.

Flame Jet: 3 6" -
Target enemy model suffers [3] DMG and the burning condition.

Character Traits

Tactical Advice [Stave]
During the Maintenance Phase, if the named model is within [4"], this model gains [+1/+1] INF.

Magical Brew
Once per turn during this model's activation, it can remove any conditions currently on it.

Burning Passion
This model gains [+1] DMG against an enemy model suffering the burning condition.

Heroic Play

Human Ball of Fire
Any model whose base is touched during this model's Advance suffer the burning condition. At the end of this model's activation it suffers [4] DMG.



STOKER MASTER OF THE STILLs

The heat from the furnace in the room was oppressive. Hooper could feel the sweat trickling down his back just standing at the other end of the room from the huge stone structure. How this man could spend more than ten minutes in here without stripping down his clothes completely was a mystery to the tough ganger.

The Brewer in question stood in front of a large cylindrical still, the ruddy bronze reflecting the bright flames and casting curious shadows over his face. He was muttering a rhyme tunelessly under his breath in thickly accented Raed. Hooper wondered why anyone would choose to spend more time brewing alcohol than drinking it, even this crazy bastard.

He had never liked the madman's glint in the corner of Stokers eye. Hooper knew the stare, the same as a cornered mook in a fight, a dangerous and unbinged desperation. The stocky Eisnoran wasn't desperate when he threw down though. No one could say that of him as he laughed his head off and bellowed great explosions of fire.

Unbinged maybe.

Rumours were in abundance as to why Stoker came to the Brewer's Guild in Maldriven. Having known those piercing eyes, maniac grin and the crazed rolling berserker laughter, Hooper could quite easily believe the popular one; that he was fleeing after murdering some guild official back in Eisnor. It was, of course, hopelessly exaggerated. They said Stoker cut the man down in his furnace room and then dragged him into the heart of the flames of an enormous hearth, the like of which no man had ever seen. He was supposed to have spent a day and a night there, hiding as they searched for him, before emerging and making his escape.

The end was obviously bull. But the rest? Situated as he was in Stoker's lair right now, it seemed all too likely. A man like the Master Boiler had few friends and those that he did have could become enemies in a moment. A soldier like Hooper didn't back down from a fight, but he did pick the time and place. Better not to have this one at all, but certainly not here if he did.

'The Guv wants us. All of us. The rest are out back in the yard.' Hooper left, not waiting for a reply, or even to see whether Stoker had heard him.

FRIDAY TRAGIC ORPHAN

Inventively spiteful, sharp tongued and mean spirited, Friday was born into the Brewer's Guild and has only ever known it. The product of an unwanted pregnancy, a frantic coupling between two gangers that never even came close to anything beyond a drunken moment in an alley; Friday was adopted as his own by an usually kindly Magister at the guild after her mother was murdered by a rival gang, her father long since forgotten.

As she grew older, Friday naturally gravitated towards the ganger lifestyle of her peers, despite the best efforts of her adoptive father to groom her into a ministerial role with the guild. Before too far into her teenage years, she had skipped her home and spent her nights either on the floors of pubs, gang safe houses, or in the beds of tough gangers.

Although Friday would not know it, having severed ties with him years ago, in one sense she has lived up to the hopes of the Magister that took her in; she has become a firm fixture of the Brewer's Guild Ball team. Friday took to Guild Ball as a dog to its vomit. Each match fills her stony heart with more enthusiasm and joy than she would dare admit and she eagerly awaits the day each week that she might run out in front of the crowds and shine brighter than any bastard child might dare to aspire to.

More insecure than anyone would know from her tough exterior, Friday greets the uncertainty of tomorrow with a sense of pragmatism not found in any other member of the Brewer's Guild and intends to survive at all costs. Friday's ambitions are to rise to Guild Ball captaincy one day far off and to somehow be safe from the turbulent and ever revolving line-up changes that the guild's power struggles subject the side to.

It is a cold logic which she does not entertain lightly, but Friday even acknowledges that this might even require a change of allegiance to another guild; if it does, Friday will have no qualm about doing so and will not waste time looking back at those that took her in and raised her with any wasted affection.

Until that time, Friday will use any guile or ability she has to strengthen her position, on or off the pitch.

Friday

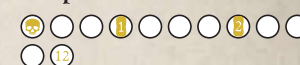
Mald, Human, Melee Zone - 1"
Female, Striker Size - 30mm

MOV	TAC	KICK	DEF	ARM	INF
6/8"	4	3/8"	4+	1	2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Dirty Knives: 2 6" - Yes
Target enemy model suffers [-1] DEF, [1] DMG and the poison condition.

Character Traits

Shadow Like
At the start of this model's activation, it may make a [2"] Dodge.

Defence Support [Spigo]
While within [4"] of the named model, this model gains [+1] DEF.

Get Over Here! [Scum]
During this model's activation, if named model is within [10"] of this model, the named model may make a Dodge up to its base-move directly towards this model.

Heroic Play

I Shoot Better after a Beer...
This model gains [+1/+2"] KICK. This model gains [+1] DEF against Parting Blow attacks.



Spigot

Raed, Human, Male,
Defensive Midfielder

Melee Zone + 1"
Size + 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5/8" 5 3/6" 3+ 1 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Tooled Up: I 4" Yes

Target friendly model gains [+1] DMG to Character Plays that cause damage and Playbook damage results. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Ball's Gone!: 3 P

Tackle the target enemy model. The ball-token may then be placed in possession of a friendly model within [4"].

Character Traits

Football Legend

While within this aura, friendly models gain [+1/+1"] KICK.

Floored

This model gains [+2] TAC against models suffering the knocked-down condition.

Heroic Play

Times Called [4" Aura]

Friendly models starting their Advance within this aura gain [+2"/+2"] MOV.



SPIGOT IGNOMINIOUS DRUNK

Used to be in the early days that Spigot was the best of the best. No one could touch him. Ask any of the old timers like Mallet and they'll tell you stories you won't believe about how good he was.

So what went wrong? Gods only know. Mallet tells it like the man fell hard for his brew. Like real hard, off the wagon, ran over by it and then rolled into the gutter. Ain't never crawled out since. Poor bastard. No idea why it happened. P'haps he just had too many good times, back when he was at his peak. Fame gets a man that way some times, grabs him by the scruffo' the neck, shows him the best nights of his life, wakes him up with a different girl in his bed every morning, has everyone wanting to be his friend.

Only so much you can live that though. Word is that they first used to turn a blind eye to him staggering around still rendered during practice, or when he used to turn up late for games. Product of his guild I s'ppose, wouldn't fly with us, but then the Brewer's have never been known for much discipline, whichever backer they have at the time.

But even they had to sit up and take notice when he passed out in the dugout or started not showing up for games. Lots of things you can do in Guild Ball that will get you blacklisted, but no-showing is a big one.

Everyone stopped being his friend then. The good times were over, in a big way. But you have to give the Drunks their due, they've kept him around. You know, that man has survived so many different team changes in his guild; even Greyscales probably couldn't remember them all. And let me tell you, it's not because of his jokes. They're all terrible. Only one I feel sorrier for than his audience when he levels one of them is him. He always looks so desperate to fit in, be one of the crowd again, gets that twitchy eye goin', and the nervous smile. You watch, looks like he might break into tears at any moment. Still not all there, no way.

No, they keep him around, because every so often, you see a little of the old Spigot out there. A little bit of the magic. That's what wins them games when it looks bad. He's not reliable and it doesn't happen in every game. But when it does? Well, even the best won't be able to stop him.

- Brick, Mason's Guild



THE MASON'S GUILD

*The Mason's Guild? Rock solid. Safe as houses, if you'll forgive me the pun.
No? Rough crowd tonight.*

- Spigot, Brewers Guild

The Mason's Guild has always existed in a position of enviable prestige throughout the Empire of the Free Cities. Admired even before the Century Wars; they were propelled to the heights of power that all guilds inherited at the end of that bloody conflict. After all, what king can rule without a palace? What city is secure from invasion without walls to protect it? In the early days, many of the other guilds survived in the pockets of the Mason's Guild who constructed the most magnificent and architecturally astonishing of the greater guild houses.

Power came with a cost however and the Century Wars had a sting in the tail for the Masons. After an initial investiture of capital in battlements, forts and barracks across the Sovereign States, expenditure was diverted and spending prioritised on the upkeep and training of the immense armies that marched forth from each city. As the initial hope that the conflict would expire in timely fashion dwindled, so too did the fortunes of the guild.

During this time the Mason's Guild was forced to watch its once unassailable position diminish with each passing day, existing at the mercy of its rivals and forced to give up the bonds that it held over the other guilds. When the assembled guild representatives finally went forth to end the Wars, for the representative from the Mason's Guild, the negotiations were a last roll of the dice before the guild faced total financial bankruptcy and dissolution.

In the years after the Century Wars rebuilding began in earnest and the Banker's Guild began to fund each of the Sovereign State's governments. The Mason's Guild saw in this their salvation and began to slowly regain ground and esteem amongst their peers. More forward thinking Magisters within the guild were quick to place their agents in positions of power; influencing vital projects such as aqueducts, roadways, housing and civic improvements. They were also well placed to prevent other guilds from taking advantage of their reduced status.

The slow restoration of the guild would mean a timid start once Guild Ball was established and for many years, the Mason's Guild was a relative unknown on the field of play. It remained so until inter-guild politics conspired to create a new Master Artificer at the head of a new ruling house. Rankled by the lack of esteem and prominence amongst the guilds, new drive was put into creating a formidable Guild Ball team that would stand against their rivals and propel the Mason's Guild back to their rightful place as one of the most powerful throughout the Empire of the Free Cities. Significant investiture from the newly emboldened financiers and a fresh influx of talent followed and in 14c the Mason's Guild surprised the world, beating the Butcher's Guild with a one sided clean sheet in the season's grand final.



HARMONY

TOWER

HONOUR

FLINT

BRICK

MALLET

MARBLES



TEAMS



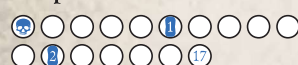
Honour
Castellyian, Human, Female,
Captain, Central Midfielder

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 6 4/6" 3+ 2 3/6

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Quick Time: 2 4"

Target friendly model may make a [2"] Dodge.
This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Superior Strategy: 4 4" Yes

Target friendly guild model gains [1] Influence and an additional activation.

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

Linked [Harmony]
When this models activation ends, if the friendly named model has not activated this turn it may take its activation next, if able to do so.

Responsive Play
Once per turn, when an enemy model ends its Advance in this model's melee zone, this model may immediately make an Attack against that model.

Assist [Marbles]
When making an Attack against an enemy model engaged by the named model, this model gains [+1] TAC and [+1] DMG to Character Plays that cause damage and Playbook damage results.

Legendary Play

Topping Out!
[4" Pulse]
Choose eith [+1] ARM or [1] Influence. Friendly guild models within the pulse gain the chosen benefit.

HONOUR, FIRST LADY OF GUILD BALL MASON'S GUILD TEAM CAPTAIN

Honour has seen more of the world than anyone her age has a right to. A mercenary from a young age, she fought far and wide in the later stages of the Century Wars. As the conflict lingered, standing armies became dangerously depleted and desperate Sovereign States began to dig deep into their coffers to hire free companies.

Disaster would strike just weeks before the armistice. During a military engagement to protect a vital holding in enemy territory, her outfit was decimated by the Skaldic State Guard who gained access through the efforts of a traitor within the mercenaries' own ranks. Overrun and with a handful of loyal men remaining after a bloody retreat, Honour found herself promoted to commander. Despite her own misgivings at her new role, she was pragmatic enough to know that she wanted above all to steer her own fate and accepted.

Honour immediately began rebuilding the group to allow only trusted soldiers; ever conscious of the betrayal that had come before. At the end of the war, her band found themselves in the unique position of being rested and at near full strength, able to accept contracts from the haughty nobility with whom unification did not rest well. These she duly exploited to even greater profitability than before and saw the troupe active in petty border disputes across the entirety of the fledgling nation.

It could not last. As the principalities and power hungry barons became increasingly pacified or were outright blackmailed into submission by the guilds that had orchestrated the peace, Honour saw the power shift. She was not long in making relations with the guilds, and offering her services to the highest bidder.

After a short career of clandestine activities for her new masters, the Mason's Guild became interested in her unique talents and decided that she would be much better employed in a permanent role within their ranks. When the new dynasty finally cast aside the guild's last vestiges of poverty and shame, Honour was the first offered an absurdly generous stipend to become a member of their team. Faced by the overwhelmingly profitable contract and the guarantee of work for as long as she could see into the future, Honour accepted.

Honour quickly rose to captaincy, her past life serving her well in a command role again. In the years since, Honour has existed as one of the best examples of Guild Ball's role models, something that is not lost on her hordes of devoted supporters. Every little girl in the stands dreams of living the life of the romantic mercenary turned Guild Ball star and every red-blooded male wants to be the one to thaw her icy heart.

MARBLES, EXOTIC PRIMATE MASON'S GUILD TEAM MASCOT

Presented to Honour for her services to the city of Dharli in the farflung Sovereign State of Indossa, Marbles has been with the Mason's Guild ever since the team's current team captain took her place at the head of the crew.

Mischievous by nature, an annoyance to both friend and foe alike, no other mascot in all of Guild Ball divides both players and fans so much as Marbles does.

Marbles
Indar, Animal, Mascot

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

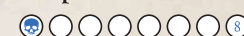
MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 3 1/4" 4+ 1 1/2

Loved Creature
When this model suffers the taken-out condition as the result of an enemy Attack or play, the friendly team gains [2] MP and for the remainder of the turn friendly models gain [+2] TAC, [+2" /+2"] MOV.

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays

COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Tooled Up: 1 4" - Yes

Target friendly model gains [+1] DMG to Character Plays that cause damage and Playbook damage results. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Goad: 1 6" - Yes

While this model is on the Pitch, the target enemy model can only move directly towards this model during its Advance. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.



Flint
Raed, Human,
Male, Striker

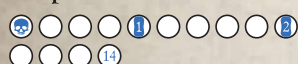
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5/8" 4 3/8" 3+ 1 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Super Shot: 1 S Yes
This model gains [+1/+2"] KICK.

Where'd They Go? 1 / S
This model may make a [4"] Dodge. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Character Traits

Close Control

Once per turn, this model may ignore the first Tackle Playbook result against it.

Charmed [Human]

This model gains [+1] DEF against every Attack and Character Play made by the named model type.



FLINT VETERAN ROGUE

Flint sat cross-legged on the bench, head resting on the wall behind him, his eyes closed. The others limbered up, strapped on armour or offered prayers to their patron deity. Flint took steady, deep breaths and exhaled slowly. He could hear the early crowds chanting outside, a faint rumble as they stamped their feet on the stands.

This was his pre match ritual. Every game without fail. Leave it to the others to grow nervous, to appeal to dubious superstition or divine intervention. He might have done the same once before, until prison life had forced him to learn the hard way how to focus the mind.

Reflecting upon his life, prison internment had been a positive step in self-improvement. If he had not been incarcerated, then he would not have spent years playing Guild Ball against the other inmates out in the yard. Never honed the skills that earned him the recognition of the Mason's Guild once again, after shamefully being discharged years before.

Back then he had been looking for a life with excitement. His crime had brought disgrace to himself and his father... and had destroyed the old man he knew. Tough shit. You couldn't rely on anyone. He might have felt more sympathy if the old bastard had stuck up for him at his trial.

He vaguely remembered that he didn't care much for Guild Ball when he was a kid. In prison his interest had been born out of boredom. But the game grabbed you by the balls, he had to admit that. And with guild involvement, it had overnight become something much better. Who cared about a game over a roasting pig? No one. But a game played for serious money, and by the big boys? That was different.

The crowd were more in number and much louder now. The stamping was rhythmic, a heartbeat. One great orgiastic mass of raw, naked excitement. The game encompassed everything in these moments and Flint always knew to simply savour them. He could feel his pulse begin to speed up, that same fire start to work its way throughout his body. Guild Ball was his religion, his deity, a fickle mistress of fates and fortunes.

Flint wore an easy grin. It was time to go to work.

MALLET THE OLD WORKHORSE

Mallet? He's a good old boy that one. Yeah, I know he's not on our side young blood, but don't yet that stop you having respect for the man. Known him for years I have, and he's only ever been a good man. Never once broken the rules, always followed his orders and never mouthed off at his teammates. Wish that could be said for those damned Meatheads or you young-uns. Yep, he's old school, just like me, no other school like it. Me and him, we've seen more years in this game than anyone else, and you know why? Call it a gentleman's agreement if you want, a code of honour between old warriors. Don't see that with anyone else these days. Whole game filled with opportunists, no love of the sport anymore.

You can call me an old romantic if you want, I know that's what you're thinking. Mayhaps I am. But I know that he'd agree with me. Oh, he's a sullen sort alright, never has a good word to say about anyone. Suits his team right down to the ground, heh. Sturdy, dependant, craggy, earthy. But you mark my words that the man is one of the best you'll ever face across the other side of the pitch. You don't need to worry about him hacking off a limb if he wastes you, or losing an eye to that knife on his belt. Won't see him gut a man that's down or take liberties, just does his work.

He's probably near retirement like me by now. It will be a shame when that ship sails. The game will be less without him. Either that, or he's like me and won't give it up because he loves Guild Ball so much. After spending so long on some ships, you become a fixture on them; just like the figurehead, you know? Well, you probably wouldn't young blood, but one day with a little bit of luck you might. Oh, and do yourself a favour, don't make the mistake of asking him about that. He's got none too pretty a way of speaking about anything. Don't take it personal like, it's just the way he is, gutter mouthed bastard, never has a good word to say about anyone, even if he likes them.

Now that I think about it my boy, I haven't shared a tankard with Mallet in a long time. Might have to rectify that next our ships are in the same port. You can join us if you'd like, listen to all the old tales from the good old days. Did I ever tell you about the time that ol' Greyscales and Mallet got into this fight at the Drunken Sailor over in Aldebrecht? No? Well, listen on...

Greyscales, Fisherman's Guild Vice Captain

Mallet
Castellyian, Human, Male, Defensive Midfielder
Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
4/6" 5 2/6" 3+ 2 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Singled Out: P Yes
Friendly models gain [+2] TAC against target enemy model.

Smashed Shins: P Yes
Target enemy model suffers [-4/-4"] KICK.

Character Traits

Football Legend [4" Aura]

While within this aura, friendly models gain [+1 / +1"] KICK.

Extended Reach

During its activation this model's melee zone is [3"].

Forceful Blow

During a Charge, in addition to any Playbook damage result, the targeted enemy model suffers a [2"] Push directly away and [2] DMG.



TEAMS



Brick
Castellyian, Human,
Male, Centre Back

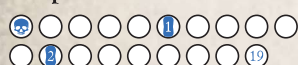
Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 40mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
4"/6" 5 1/6" 2+ 2 2/3

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Concussion: 10 P
Target enemy model loses [1] Influence.

Character Traits

Knockback
In addition to any Character Play or Playbook result, the targeted enemy model suffers a [1"] Push directly away. This model may then make a [1"] Dodge directly towards the affected enemy model.

Counter Charge
Once per turn, when an enemy model ends its Advance within [6"] of this model, if this model is not engaged this model may immediately make a Charge targeting the enemy model.

BRICK

THE UNSTOPPABLE JUGGERNAUT

Through narrowed eyes, Brick glared across the pitch at Gbast, stood several feet away.

'Come on then Spook, face me!'

Before he could take a step forward the impassive eyes behind the mask flickered right and Gbast sidestepped as a howling Cosset ran screaming between them, hooked claws raised. For an absurdly comic and horrific moment, her widened eyes stared frantically at each of them and her head ticked short, sharp movements left and right; it seemed as though both combatants waited to see which of them she would attack. Then, the moment was over as her head snaked its way towards Brick.

'At me then witch! You can be next!' Brick smashed his heavy knuckledusters together.

Cosset leapt at him, hair trailing behind her like a funeral veil, snapping her bladed claws. Brick stood his ground waiting. Waiting, as she flew closer. One mistake would likely cost him an eye.

With a horrible crunch, the hulking Mason's fist ploughed into her chest. Cosset's berserk eyes bulged impossibly, the spittle from her mouth splattered his gauntlet and then she was falling, thrown backwards. She landed in broken heap next to where Gbast had stood moments ago. Where had the Silent Terror gone? Brick looked warily left and right trying to locate the sinister giant.

On some unconscious whim he looked up to see a rustle of black feathers. Gods! Now the damned bird too? Aware he had to finish this quickly, he waited until the bird had committed itself to the attack, ready to peck at his exposed face. Then in a swift move that belayed his size, a huge hand grabbed at the crow and crushed it between his fingers.

Feeling the sharp pain of its talons sunk into his skin, its beak hammering into the soft flesh of his thumb, Brick's rage finally overcame him and he simply tightened his hand into a fist, smashing the delicate bird into a bloody pulp of feathers and broken limbs. It let lose a single strangled squawk as he dropped it and then drove a heavy stomp to its remains. The Mason snorted. Damn Spooks would have another one next week anyhow.

Leaving the bloody smear behind him, he looked around for another Spook twig to snap in half.

HARMONY

THE SCARLET STAR

The Scarlet Star ran out of the dugout and onto the fresh pitch. The roar from the crowd, cheering smattered with catcalls and whistles, deafened her. She lazily raised one hand in salute to them as she jogged over to the rest of her squad. Mallet offered her his best disapproving glare.

'Just keep smiling at my people old man. And try not to get in my way later, okay?'

Mallet snorted.

Ignoring him, Harmony flicked back an errant bangle and flashed a radiant smile at the crowds. The furore grew even louder, even more ear-splittingly so. Over on the other side of the pitch, she could see an envious Brisket staring daggers at her. Let that bitch stew in her jealousy. These people were here for Harmony alone.

Beautiful, charming, talented, and flamboyant. Those would be the words Harmony would use to describe herself, a key playmaker for the Mason's Guild. Others would tell the rest of the tale. Vain, arrogant, conceited and filled with an overbearing sense of self-importance.

Unlike her sister Honour, Harmony is not in Guild Ball for the long term. She intends only to use the game to attract the eye of a wealthy noble or better yet, a prince. Then to marry her way into high society, leaving the brutal day-to-day life of a Guild Ball player far behind her. The guilds are a little else other than a necessary means to an end for a girl that grew up poor in a starving family. Leave the glory and the legacy for boring, stale Honour.

The woman known as the Scarlet Star is the beloved poster child of Guild Ball, she weaves her dance for the fans each week, amid thundering approval from the stands. Ever careful to hide her hidden agenda, Harmony is careful to keep up appearances. Remembering to smile or flirt with the right person at the right time will go a long way. Aware that her kinship with Honour will only allow her so much leeway, she is careful to not leave her elder sister wondering why she accepted her manipulative sibling into the squad.

And it works, or at least has so far. Much to their disgust, only veterans such as Mallet and the ever vigilant Greyscales seem to see truth behind the smile.

Harmony
Castellyian, Human,
Female, Winger

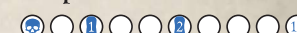
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 3 2/6" 5+ 0 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Acrobatic: 1 S - Yes
This model gains [+1] DEF against Parting Blow attacks.

Scything Blow: 10 P -
All models within this model's melee zone suffer [3] DMG.

Character Traits

Family [Honour]
Once per turn, If this model starts its activation with [4"] of the named model, this model can replace its TAC and KICK with the named model's values.

Protected [Brick]
While within [4"] of the named model, this model gains [+1] ARM.



Tower

Raed, Human, Male,
Defensive Midfielder

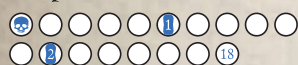
Melee Zone: 1"
Size: 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5"/8" 5 3/6" 3+ 2 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Shutout: 1 8" Yes

If target enemy model has not activated this turn, it must be the last model the enemy team activates. This Character Play may only be used once per turn per team.

Defend the Ground: 1 8" Yes

Choose a terrain piece. Friendly models within the selected terrain may use Defensive Stance without spending MP.

Character Traits

Knockback

In addition to any Character Play or Playbook result, the targeted enemy model suffers a [1"] Push directly away. This model may then make a [1"] Dodge directly towards the affected enemy model.

Floored

This model gains [+2] TAC against models suffering the knocked-down condition.

Heroic Play

Protect Those Close [2" Aura]

While within this aura, when a friendly model suffers damage, this model suffers the damage instead.



TOWER

THE REDOUBTABLE APPRENTICE

The familiar sound of cracking stone echoed through the workshop and a cloud of fine dust burst outwards as the hammer impacted on the head of the chisel, driving it into the large stone cylinder. Small fragments of the main body fell to the floor to join much larger pieces. With a critical eye, the young man looked over the work, rubbing a rough and calloused finger over the ridges carved into it, wiping away the detritus. Smiling, he adjusted the angle of the chisel and began tapping it softly with the hammer again.

The art was a sort of magic to him really. He gave the hammer one final strike and then satisfied, stepped back and admired his craft.

It was unlike any goalpost a Guild Ball pitch had ever seen and at last he considered it ready to be showcased in tomorrow's match. Pausing to give thanks to his father for passing down the plans for his great design, he threw a heavy woollen blanket over the pole, and began clearing away his tools.

In the waning light of the early evening, the two figures standing across the yard in the alley between two buildings were but mere shadows to the untrained eye. Tower, in his exhausted yet exuberant state, never noticed them. As he passed by them on his path back towards his dormitory, the taller man looked to the other.

'You see his skill, the dedication to our craft.' It was not a question.

That much had never been in doubt. Had his father not died, we would have had a Tower in our ranks long ago. But tomorrow we shall see how he performs on the pitch.'

The second man grinned, and ran thumb and forefinger through a wiry beard. 'Shouldn't we ask him first?'

There was a brief pause as both men enjoyed a quiet chuckle, and then departed.



TEAMS





THE ALCHEMIST'S GUILD

It is a new Guild. Not so unlike the others in its activities, but very much so in its ideology. Being able to have observed hundreds of years of development before beginning your own venture has a tendency to allow you to avoid certain growing pains I suspect. But being so wildly divergent in your practice will just as likely spawn different ones; mistrust for one thing. Unlike any of its rivals, the Alchemist's Guild has yet to prove to the people that its industry is worthwhile. It has the burden of proof over simple necessity that we enjoy.

Death is inevitable, a cold and hard fact. Witchcraft is not.

I possess a tome stolen from one of their libraries, a curiosity that I could not resist availing myself of when the opportunity presented itself. It is interesting reading. The volume chronicles each of their guild members' notable experiments and their results in attributable collateral events; realistically a way to address all of the explosions that have levelled buildings, led to the mysterious disappearance of townsfolk and cast eerie green fires that have burned their way through entire villages

As I mentioned, theirs is the responsibility to demonstrate that alchemical science is a worthy pursuit to a wary population. The wise know that their Guild Ball team is what shall accomplish this.

Taking to the field against the Alchemist's Guild can often be likened to an exercise in futility. The preposterous level of volatile chemicals, gaseous clouds and deadly pools of acids renders vast swathes of the pitch inhospitable to all but the most foolhardy. It with some amusement that I have watched some of the least useful members of my own guild attempt to demonstrate their worthiness by besting an Alchemist. I am sure that their guilds scientific minds would term such reckless failures as natural selection.

Often, the best method of beating an Alchemist's force projection is to resort to out-thinking them. If you can predict their movement, then you can simply deny them their game by forcing them to play defensively with their variety of tricks. This is not as simple to achieve in practice as it is to suggest it. The reality is that their team is full of unpredictable elements, much like their trade. In particular Mercury, the contemptible man with the fiery hands and the deranged woman Vitriol often seem entirely unwilling to do anything but exercise their baser instincts.

This is certainly an unusual trait in a scientist and one that has more than once taken me unawares.

Of course, the real victory in this for the Alchemist's Guild is a public relations one. The sense that they are an overwhelming entity, impossibly advanced over their peers is one easily impressed upon the weak willed peasants that follow this game. By forcing their rivals to adapt their game to try and limit a playbook rather than bringing their own tools to bear is just another method of maintaining this superiority. Even if they are beaten, the crowds will likely leave with the bright lights and colours of their tricks seared into their minds. Very rare is it that a team plays against the Alchemist's Guild and is able to close them down so completely as to stop the subtly insidious propaganda machine that I recognise they have.

There is more at stake here for them than just the game.

- Obulus, Mortician's Guild Team Captain



VITRIOL

MERCURY

MIDAS

CALCULUS

FLASK

KATALYST



TEAMS



Calculus

Ethraynnian, Human,
Female, Central Midfielder

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5"/8" 4 3/6" 4+ 1 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Blind: 1 6" AOE₃ Yes

Enemy models hit suffer [-4] TAC and [-4"/-4"] MOV. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Noxious Blast: 2 8" AOE₃ Yes

All models hit suffer [2] DMG and the poison condition. Models entering or ending their activation in this ongoing-effect AOE suffer the poison condition. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Character Traits

Poisonous Fumes [1" Aura]

Enemy models entering or starting their activation in this aura suffer the poison condition.



CALCULUS MAIDEN OF SCIENCE

Initially, it always irked Calculus to see Midas not wearing his apron in the laboratory, yet another way for their tiresome captain to lord his status over the rest of the team.

As time went on however, Calculus saw that this couldn't be further from the truth. Her current considered observation was that Midas was uninterested in what anyone in either his team or the guild at large thought of him. His lack of apron instead was likely the product of a reckless mind and only a casual relationship with proper safety protocol. That was all.

She was likely to have been appointed team captain until the arrival of Midas. But then, Calculus was a woman dedicated to demonstrating to the world the power and benefit of what alchemy might bring. A petty role within her guild such as Team Captain meant little to her in the grand scheme of the universe. She could serve the guild just as well in her role as Vice-Captain. Concepts such as pride or self interest were beneath the enlightened.

Mercury was leaning casually against the wall, looking over the multitude of vials, flasks, phials and the bubbling concoctions therein that made up her experiments. His raised eyebrow suggested amusement somehow. He flashed her a roguish grin, his lips curling underneath his moustache. It was an oddly charming yet predatory gesture. Dismissed as an attention seeking womaniser by most, for all there was clearly some truth to the rumours, Calculus was sure that there was far more to Mercury than hedonistic indulgence.

Her mind contemplated the others in their cabal. The headstrong Katalyst and poor bitter Vitriol, always so quick to fly at each other's throats. A difference in philosophy and nothing more, however tiresome. One progressive, the other regressive. Simple therefore that they could never see eye to eye. At least they kept it away from the pitch. Necessarily volatile base chemicals in the compound that was the Alchemist's Guild team. No one would honestly deny the logic of their inclusion. Both brought too potent an element to ignore.

Calculus liked to make measured observations. That was what science was. Measured, considered and reproducible results. The ascension of mankind's thinking beyond superstition by method of empirical data. To her, that was what a Guild Ball team could be understood by also. A game by extension was a further mixing of two solutions to create further amalgamation. And it was her task to ensure that the mixture produced the desired results.

MERCURY THE FLARE OF PASSION

I don't think he cares much about guild business, perhaps not even the game. He's not like the others, trying to save us all with his witch magic, not even like that power hungry sop they call a captain. He's less a Lab Rat and more a flashy, showy Drunk. Yes, the Brewer's Guild might like him, throw the cat right amongst the pigeons.

I think he's just in this for the women. Typical Ethraynnian. Got his trick with his gloves nailed down to show off like, made the squad and then started chasing tail like a sailor just got into dock. It works, I'll grant you. Never known any other player go down such a big hit in the stands. I hear that he even has a whole bery of them follow him around like his own personal fan club. You can bet that hedonistic bastard has some stories that would turn a priest's ears red.

One day, he'll retire and write a book out of it, if no one wastes him too hard first. I'd pay good coin to be left alone with the smirking bastard myself; see if he's such a hit after I'd be done with him. Something about him just rubs me the wrong way.

Probably when I've seen him pass up the chance to score before, just so he can show off and get the stands to cheer him. That don't make him too popular with the old school none either, let me tell you. Between the boys in the packs that don't care for the Lab Rats, the old timers that run things that he don't follow the orders of and the hardliners like the boss, he don't have many friends.

He's got the goods though. You ever see what he did to that Mason? Smelt like bacon. Don't engage him directly. If you can, try for a backstab. Less dangerous that way. I don't care whether you get wasted or not mind, but more of us against less of them is good pickings. No sense in running by the skin of your teeth unless you have to. And if he starts throwing those fireballs around? My best advice is not to hang around where they're about to land. You could wind up smelling like bacon too.

You might just about get away with not making yourself a target though. If he don't think none of you, or that you're no threat, he might just go after someone more impressive looking for his fan club. He won't care about whether his guild wants you taken out or not, doesn't play that game.

At the end of the day, the guild is just a seal stamped on his cheques, a means to an end. That's all. Almost respectable really, it's about the only thing of him I can respect. That's probably why I haven't knifed him yet when our paths have crossed.

• Shank, Butcher's Guild Vice Captain

Mercury

Ethraynnian, Human,
Male, Central Midfielder

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5"/8" 4 4/6" 4+ 1 1/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Fire Blast: 2 8" AOE₃

All models hit suffer [2] DMG and the burning condition. Models entering or ending their activation in this ongoing-effect AOE suffer the burning condition. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Flame Jet: 3 6"

Target enemy model suffers [3] DMG and the burning condition.

Character Traits

Burning Spirit [1" Aura]

Enemy models entering or starting their activation in this aura suffer the burning condition.

Tactical Advice [Flask]

During the Maintenance Phase, if the named model is within [4"], this model gains [+1/+1] INF.



TEAMS



Katalyst

Erskirii, Human, Male, Melee Zone - 1"
Attacking Midfielder Size - 40mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5/8" 6 2/6" 2+ 0 2/3

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Intensify: 2 / S Pulse 3"

Enemy models that are suffering conditions and are within the pulse, suffer [2] DMG.

Rabid Animal: P Yes

Target enemy model suffers [-4"/-4"] MOV and the poison condition.

Character Traits

Elemental Infusion

If this model makes an Attack against an enemy model that is suffering from one or more of the following conditions, the following cumulative benefits apply to the Attack against that model:
burning: [+1] DMG to Playbook damage results.
poison: [+2] TAC.
bleed: Target suffers [-1] ARM.



KATALYST FALLEN PROMETHEUS

Not all alchemy is concerned with conversion of inorganic materials. For some scientists, the pursuit of extending mankind's years and to emerging victorious against ravages of time is a much nobler study. One such alchemist is known to others as Katalyst.

On the pitches upon which Guild Ball is played, the hulking Katalyst stalks the opposition, limbs in a perpetual state of paroxysm, snorting great deep breaths through his restrictive mask. The cylindrical generator strapped to his back whines and churns as chemicals rush through the heavy piping connecting the apparatus to the barbaric looking sockets set into his skin. Needles on dials whirl manically from number to number, in and out of the painted red sections, muscles on the man twitching accordingly.

Behind the mask, Katalyst wears a rictus face, locked between a hideous maniacal grin and the grimace of a person in sheer agony. His teeth crack as he gnashes them together, spittle runs along the underside of his chin, collecting in rivulets that trail onto his immense chest. Sporadically and uncontrollably there is emitted a titanic bellow, half terrifying roar, half strangled sob. Katalyst is feral and powerful, like some primordial creature of legend come to life to dominate and maim, to break men across his knee.

But the same compound that has sustained his growth into the towering wall of muscle and that feeds his raw brutality is also killing Katalyst. Over time, he is aware that it will simply liquefy his organs. After each game he staggers from the field to collapse, crawl into the foetal position and await the inevitable shuddering torment of withdrawal from his elixir.

Ironically, Katalyst has seen a glimpse that he is desperately close to the secret of life eternal in his laboratory. A more collected individual might devote himself entirely to research, in the hope that the formula could be perfected in his lifetime.

But then Katalyst has never been known for his patience. He will achieve the greatness he yearns for however he can, destroying his body as his mind searches for his answer. Only time will tell whether he retires a legend; the man that discovered the secret of eternal life, or dies an undignified victim to his own reckless folly.

VITRIOL THE FULMINATION OF PROGRESS

Jaded, spiteful and antagonistic, subject to the whims of a manic depressive personality, the woman known as Vitriol is ruled by the tacit understanding that she is a failure. But it was not always this way.

The young Meredith Tieger possessed a mind unlike any other in the small community that she grew up in. The child that would always stay at school to study and ask endless difficult questions that the priests would struggle to answer. As she grew older Meredith's studies progressively took over her life, until, hopelessly alienated from her community and family at last she fled; bound for the Alchemist's Guild, a place that offered sanctity and fellowship to a mind with vested scientific interest.

There, her superiors looked on with interest as she excelled, a young woman so dedicated to the furthering of scientific wisdom. Meredith promised much and refused to be cowed by the unknown, arguing the nature of the world with those educated scholars that contented themselves otherwise. Soon she fast outstripped her peers' understanding, frequently spending long nights in the laboratories in search of a greater comprehension of the universe.

It was on such a night that Vitriol would be born through tragedy. The details are not known of the terrible accident itself or of Meredith's intent, but as with so many alchemical studies, the volatile experiment resulted in a raging inferno which would engulf an entire wing of the guild house before the blaze could be brought under control. The woman that emerged from that conflagration would be forever changed by hideous disfigurement and the ruin of her career.

Although none that had known Meredith before the accident would have called her friendly or personable as she sought to master the universe and chart its elements, the changes now are very apparent. For the realisation that she so heinously misunderstood her study has dominated her personality, leaving a dangerously introverted and isolated woman.

Only confident in the basic compounds which she previously knew as absolutes, Vitriol is content to confine her experimentation to corrosive acids and sulphuric materials alone. This seems to be the only remaining drive left to the broken woman and for her guild, leaves them only one suitable home for her, where her destructive capabilities can be fully appreciated.

Vitriol

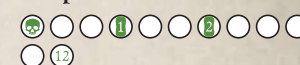
Skaldic, Human, Female, Striker Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6/8" 5 4/8" 5+ 0 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Smoke Bomb: 1 8" AOE 3"

Models within this ongoing-effect AOE benefit from cover. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Clone: 2 / S Yes

This model may ignore the first Character Play or Playbook result against it, then may make a [2"] Dodge.

Character Traits

Cover of Darkness

If this model starts an Advance while benefiting from cover, it gains [+2"/+2"] MOV.

Skilled within Shadow

This model gains [+2] TAC while targeting an enemy model benefiting from cover.

Hidden Damage

When this model targets an enemy model that benefits from cover, gain [+1] DMG to all Playbook damage results against that model.



THE MORTICIAN'S GUILD

Real old guild, the Mortician's. Been around in pretty much most parts longer than anyone else. Guess if there's one certainty in this life, its death, eh? Not that you're going to catch one of them with my body when my time is up, young blood. Nope, plain and simple burial at sea for old Greyscales, just like the gods always wanted. This business of interfering with the dead and not letting the elements take them how they choose is all wrong, if you ask me. The Lords of the Deep washed me ashore and can take me back again when I'm done.

Plenty that would disagree with me though. Solthebian cult for one thing has always had strong ties to the Spooks. Same with some of the other religions and the rich and powerful too, mostly the nobles. Yes, mighty old fashioned guild, the Mortician's. Enjoyed patronage from all aspects of society for a long time.

Let me tell you, I don't think that they suffered none in the Century Wars like everyone else did. When your business is death, a war is good news I s'ppose. No new thinking, no influx of new people. Might be why they always seem so stale, like the bottom of a fishing trawler. Ha!

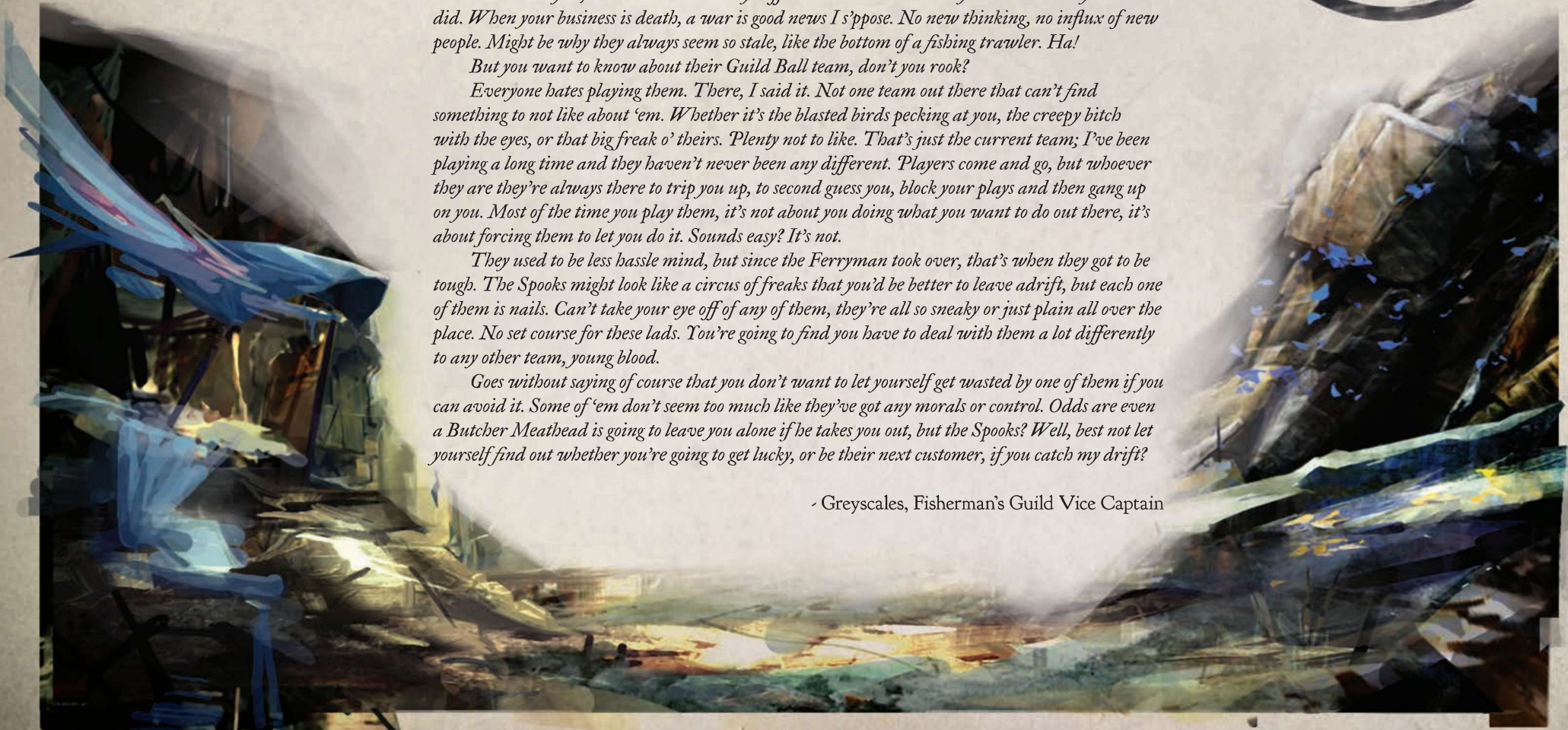
But you want to know about their Guild Ball team, don't you rook?

Everyone hates playing them. There, I said it. Not one team out there that can't find something to not like about 'em. Whether it's the blasted birds pecking at you, the creepy bitch with the eyes, or that big freak o' theirs. Plenty not to like. That's just the current team; I've been playing a long time and they haven't never been any different. Players come and go, but whoever they are they're always there to trip you up, to second guess you, block your plays and then gang up on you. Most of the time you play them, it's not about you doing what you want to do out there, it's about forcing them to let you do it. Sounds easy? It's not.

They used to be less hassle mind, but since the Ferryman took over, that's when they got to be tough. The Spooks might look like a circus of freaks that you'd be better to leave adrift, but each one of them is nails. Can't take your eye off of any of them, they're all so sneaky or just plain all over the place. No set course for these lads. You're going to find you have to deal with them a lot differently to any other team, young blood.

Goes without saying of course that you don't want to let yourself get wasted by one of them if you can avoid it. Some of 'em don't seem too much like they've got any morals or control. Odds are even a Butcher Meathead is going to leave you alone if he takes you out, but the Spooks? Well, best not let yourself find out whether you're going to get lucky, or be their next customer, if you catch my drift?

- Greyscales, Fisherman's Guild Vice Captain



SILENCE

GRAVES

OBULOUS

GHAST

COSSET

CASKET

DIRGE



TEAMS



DIRGE, CACOPHONOUS DISCORD

MORTICIAN'S GUILD TEAM MASCOT

Thrice damned bird. I've never known anything more annoying in the game. Any time you run against the Spook's, you can guarantee the bloody thing is going to be there, pecking at you whenever you want to do anything. Never actually hurts no one mind, but just makes everything go wrong.

• Corsair, Fisherman's Guild

Dirge

Valentian, Animal, Mascot

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
8"/10" 2 1/4" 5+ 0 1/2

Playbook

1 T 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Hitpoints

1 2 3 4 5

Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Singled Out: P Yes

Friendly models gain [+2] TAC against target enemy model.

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

Dark Doubts
When this model suffers the taken-out condition as the result of an enemy Attack or Play, the enemy team immediately suffers [-4] MP.

Follow Up
After the enemy model performs an Advance that takes it out of this model's melee zone, this model may immediately move its base-move directly towards it.

Flying
When this model moves it ignores other model's bases and terrain. It cannot end its movement overlapping another base or barrier terrain.

OBULUS, THE FERRYMAN

MORTICIAN'S GUILD TEAM CAPTAIN

Long, slow strides carried Obulus upon his path along the long corridor of the Mortician's Guild. The faded stained glass windows cast a murky, jaded light upon his form; washed out colours growing less remarkable with each aperture he stepped past, the day's light gradually dying outside. At this hour, the menials would soon be found scurrying about lighting candles, the flickering lights of their lanterns casting unpredictable, strangely fluid shapes to break the blackness of the long corridors.

The Ferryman was, as always, in deep contemplation. Obulus was unique amongst the fraternity of Guild Ball players inasmuch as he wielded a significant degree of power outside of the confines of the game itself. The role of a petty thug with little aspiration to call his own was not one that he entertained for himself. Since his acceptance into the inner circle of his guild, he had bent his considerable will to orchestrating a position of some influence.

At present, he was considering subject of delicate housekeeping required within his own guild. This was not a new development. Nothing in this rotting building ever moved quickly or suddenly. Obulus had learned this truth many years ago.

Obulus ruminated that to further the success of his machinations he would first have to find a way to circumnavigate the guilds authority; something that for all of his good standing, he was still subject to. He was convinced that the key was Magister Abendroth. The man's immutable nature had long since been a tiresome barrier to Obulus' own agenda. And so, each day, he bent his considerable will to brooding over how best to exploit the Magister and to press his advantage.

A figure approached, feet in slippers silently gliding along the stone tiles, the candelabra in his hand eerily lighting the underside of his face. It was Silence, the duplicitous apostate. Obulus knew that the man tried to create as ostentatious a display as possible when on guild business and the visage currently hurrying towards him was no exception to that rule. Obulus couldn't quite keep his usual scowl from deepening and the corners of his mouth turned downwards a fraction further.

The idea came to Obulus at once, as he watched Silence approach, his head tilted downwards in silent obeisance.

He knew how to manoeuvre Abendroth into his pocket and simultaneously advance his own continued rise with the Mortician's Guild. Loathe though he was to rely upon the actions of another, especially an entirely untrustworthy individual such as Silence, the man that almost stood before him would have a role to play here before being discarded as an expendable asset. Obulus could appreciate the efficiency of one scheme to remove two obstacles.

In an extremely rare occurrence, the Ferryman smiled.

Obulus

Ethraynnian, Human, Male,
Captain, Defensive Midfielder

Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

Shadow Like
At the start of this model's activation, it may make a [2"] Dodge.

Unpredictable Movement

Once per turn, when an enemy model ends an Advance in this models melee zone, this model may immediately make a [2"] Dodge.

Legendary Play

Rigor Mortis
The enemy team lose all current MP. The friendly team gains MP equal to the MP loss caused by this action. This legendary play does not last until the end of the turn.

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
4"/6" 6 2/6" 4+ 1 5/8

Playbook

1 T 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Hitpoints

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Confidence: 1 4" Yes

Target friendly model can reroll one or more dice during a single Attack or play during its activation.

Misdirection: 4 8"

Target enemy model loses [1] Influence. This model may immediately allocate [1] Influence to a friendly guild model within [4"].

Puppet Master: 4 8"

This model gains [1] Influence. Target model immediately makes a Jog, Pass or Attack without spending Influence. If target model is an enemy model, it counts as a friendly model during this action. This character play may only be used once per turn.



TEAMS



Silence

Valentian, Human,
Male, Central Midfielder

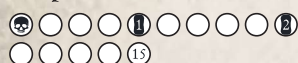
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5"/6" 5 3/6" 5+ 0 3/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Tucked: 1 8" - Yes

If target enemy model has not activated this turn, it must be the last model the enemy team activates. This Character Play may only be used once per turn per team.

Shutout: 1 8" - Yes

If target enemy model has not activated this turn, it must be the last model the enemy team activates. This Character Play may only be used once per turn per team.

Embalming Fluid: 2 8" AOE_{3"} -

All models hit suffer [1] DMG and the burning condition. Models entering or ending their activation in this ongoing effect AOE suffer the poison condition. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Character Traits

Creation [Dirge]

Once per turn, this model may spend [2] MP during its activation to remove the taken-out condition from the friendly named model and place it in base contact with full HP. The named model is not allocated Influence this turn but may activate as normal. Models created by this ability do not generate VPs.

Kick Support [Dirge]

While within [4"] of the named model, this model gains [+1/+1"] KICK.

SILENCE THE THORN WITHIN

The man known as Silence. The sycophant. The calm, rational figure in the eye of the storm that is the unpredictable, deviant Mortician's Guild. The quiet enforcer of Obulus' will throughout the guild. Dependable, consistent, loyal. The trusted lieutenant.

The traitor.

Silence has aspirations and is not content to wait for his chance to become the team captain of the Mortician's Guild through fate alone. Ever vigilant for any sort of advantage that he might be able to exploit, the Vice-Captain bides his time and plays the devoted soldier for now. Inside, he seethes at the rest of the roster. All of them disgust him. What Obulus has let the Mortician's Guild team become is an embarrassing carnival of irrational, monstrous liabilities. When Silence's inevitable rise to power is at last realised, it is unlikely that he will welcome even one of them to return to the team.

But remove the monstrosities and Silence can see the potential for the Mortician's Guild, for he alone it seems understands the problem that holds them back; the rotting misery of stagnant tradition, the institutional inability to look forward. Silence knows that he will likely have to effect great changes, but that they are all achievable in what he understands as his manifest destiny, to make the Mortician's Guild the most powerful Guild Ball team in the Empire of the Free Cities.

Unbeknown to Silence, Obulus is not blind to this. It amuses the Ferryman to watch Silence's knee scraping efforts, to watch the man purposefully humiliate himself. Obulus is far wiser than Silence about the truth behind the guild and how Silence's childlike naivety shows his utter incomprehension of reality. In truth, Silence is a much more useful tool to Obulus at present as he is, which is why the Ferryman allows his Vice-Captain to keep his place. And if ever Silence's insubordination were to grow tiresome, or his hand were to be forced, then Obulus would have no reluctance in terminating the Thorn Within at once.

COSSET IMPURE INNOCENCE

Yeab, yeab, I know. I tell you to be careful of all of the women in this game. Pab, sexist, old fashioned, whatever you want to call me. But if you know what's good for you young blood, even if you don't listen to what I say about anyone else, you'll know enough to listen now. Avoid Cosset.

Oh yeab, you heard me right. She smiled at you once? Lucky you. Looks cute, sweet, innocent maybe? Forget looks. You're wondering how a seemingly fragile looking little lamb wound up hanging with the Spooks? Truth is, she's stone cold, bat shit crazy.

Downright vicious too. I've seen her claw a man's eyes out, shrieking like a banshee the entire time. Gives me shudders just remembering it. He's lay screaming, red gory empty sockets where his eyes used to be. Blood all over the place. She's just sitting, licking it off her fingers, next to him crying and sobbing. And then she smiled at the apothecaries when they ran on to try to try and take him off, blew the poor bastard a kiss.

You don't believe me? Well, ask yourself this young blood. Why else is she on the Mortician's roster, of all teams? The Spooks only take the morbid ones, those that don't fit in nowhere else, and believe me, she definitely won't fit in somewhere else. No-one else would want something like that on the squad. Even the Mortician's have been known to give her a wide berth. At least some mean bastard like Boar is predictable. He's going to smash you into pieces if you get too close, all belligerent muscle, but he's not going to strike out at one of his own unless they get in his way.

Now, Cosset? Once, I saw her just stand there and watch a rook like you run straight past her with the ball, no tackle, nothing; then she's gone after her own mascot and ripped the thing to pieces in front of everyone, cackling away at her own joke. Totally unpredictable, irrational. They might be the only ones that will take her, but why the Spooks keep her around is a mystery to everyone. Can't be easy to build any sort of game plan around something like that. Show her the playbook, and I'll give you good odds she'll either eat it or start drawing pictures in it as much as read it.

I don't even want to waste any more time on that one, thinking about her too long gives me chills. One wrong look and next thing you know, she's flipped and only the gods know what she's going to do next.

- Greyscales, Fisherman's Guild Vice Captain

Cosset

Valentian, Human,
Female, Winger

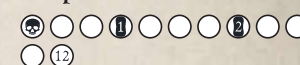
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
7"/9" 4 2/6" 4+ 0 2/2

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Lure: 2 8" -

Target enemy model immediately moves its base-move directly towards this model. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Screaming Banshee: 2 P - Yes

Target enemy model suffers [-4"/-4"] MOV and [2] DMG.

Character Traits

Crazy

Once per activation, this model may suffer [3] DMG to gain [+3] TAC for the remainder of this activation.

Furious

This model may Charge without spending Influence.

Damage Support [Dirge]

While within [4"] of the named model, this model gains [+1] DMG to Character Plays that cause damage and Playbook damage results.



Ghast

Valentian, Human,
Male, Centre Back

Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 40mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
4"/7" 6 1/6" 3+ 1 1/3

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

The Unmasking: ② ③ S Pulse 3"

All other models within the pulse suffer a [4"] Push directly away from this model and [3] DMG.

Character Traits

Rising Anger

The first time this model is damaged by an enemy model each turn, the friendly team gains [2] MP.

Fear

The enemy team must spend an additional [1] Influence on the first Character Play or Attack targeting this model each turn.



GHAST SILENT TERROR

Ghast has known no other home than the guild since childhood, when his family burnt to death in the terrible blazes that tore through Rue Lejourre during the food riots of 7c. The only survivor of the near death of a city, the boy would have had no better future than starving to death in one of the cities nameless alleyways, until uncharacteristically the Mortician's Guild intervened. A short time later the child that would become Ghast begun his service to his new patrons.

Ghast soon came to be an extremely unsettling child, growing into a silent, brooding and melancholy man. With total obedience and dedication, Ghast worked his younger years tending the grounds of the Rue Lejourre guild house, the constant physical exertion building him into a towering and formidable figure that would cause most visitors to the guild to shudder when they crossed his path. When Ghast was trialled as part of the Mortician's Guild roster, it was of no surprise to many of those same people that had encountered him. Such a redoubtable player soon proved his worth. After only a short time on the roster, the guild marked him as indispensable, and significant sponsorship began.

Eerily calm and detached, following orders with no questions, most observers could never imagine any emotion staring out from the eyes behind the heavy mask that he wears.

Then there was Mullenbrecht.

During that game, a brutal tackle tore the mask from his face and all present witnessed the rage that Ghast hides, unleashed at last. After savagely rampaging across the pitch, the screaming apparition disappeared into the depths of the city. Three days later he would reappear in the grounds of Mortician's guild house, masked once again and seemingly at peace.

The stories of when the Terror stalked the alleys and shadows of Mullenbrecht would live on. They whispered of the mutilated bodies and bloody messages painted on the walls. Since then, isolated repetitions of that unleashed malice have surfaced whenever the mask has been removed, so horrific that for days after, entire communities hide themselves away lest they becomes victims to the Ghast and his wild, indiscriminate fury.

GRAVES DOCTOR DEATH

The others might be crazies, freaks or just plain weird, but the evil one is that bastard Graves. He's as sane as you or I, but he won't see you as anything but an experiment, a rat in a maze. No sympathy, no decency, no humanity behind those glasses and that stare. He's not really here to play Guild Ball I don't think; he just likes to spear you in the gut and then watch you squirm, see how suffering looks. If you don't show him enough to his satisfaction, the sadistic swine will twist the blade a bit, make you bleed more until he gets his results. That's all he's interested in. Seeing how people hurt and what it does to them. I don't get a man like that.

I hear back in Raedland he was a Physician, got kicked out of one of the guild houses there. Don't reckon me that's too true though, you ever hear of a freelance Sawbones? Me neither. They're the worst of all the guilds for protecting their interests. More than likely he just kidnapped one and tortured him until he told Graves all he wanted to know. That I can believe. I bet he'd know just how to dispose of the body like, and work some other poor fool into taking the fall. Gods only know why he ended up in Guild Ball. You can tell that he don't feel no loyalty to his guild, they're just the one that took him in. Don't get me wrong, he's competent on the pitch, but one day I won't be surprised if he just ups and disappears.

Rumour is he's already in talks with some of our crew up top about something. That's some stones he's got if it's true. Pretty sure the Spooks wouldn't take too kindly if they knew. Can't work out what he'd have to offer us though. I don't like how little he cares about people, how he might get his hands dirty and not blink an eye, or how much he's more like one of us than most. If he's got a secret to share with the guild then that's none of my business until he makes it that way, and I think he's too smart to let that be his obituary.

If Graves comes anywhere near my boys, I'll kick the spit out of him and leave him bleeding in the gutter, you mark my words. We don't take no off-cuts, and I don't trust anyone who can change sides like that.

- Ox, Butcher's Guild Team Captain

Graves

Raed, Human,
Male, Winger

Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5"/7" 6 3/6" 4+ 1 1/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Scything Blow: ② P

All models within this model's melee zone suffer [3] DMG.

Rabid Animal: ② ③ P Yes

Target enemy model suffers [-4"/-4"] MOV and the poison condition.

Character Traits

Damaged Target

This model gains [+0"/+2"] MOV when it performs a Charge against a damaged enemy model.

Crucial Artery

When damaged by this model, enemy models suffer the bleed condition.



TEAMS



A photograph of a large, abstract, colorful sculpture or installation, possibly a mural or a large-scale painting, featuring vibrant green, yellow, and red tones, viewed from a low angle looking up. The artwork is composed of numerous overlapping, textured layers and brushstrokes, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors are rich and saturated, with a mix of organic and geometric shapes. The perspective is from below, looking up at the massive scale of the piece, which is set against a dark, possibly black, background. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures and colors of the artwork.

Shank bolted. Screw facing down whatever that was. It might have once been a man, but now it was something else entirely.

When this model inflicts the **taken-out** condition on an enemy [Human] model, that model cannot gain icy-sponge tokens and counts as 4 VPs.



THE ENGINEER'S GUILD

We are strange bedfellows. Untrusting of each other, dismissive and always looking to gain political capital to use against our opposite numbers. Yet for all that, our alliance is a necessary one that I imagine neither party could really function without. Until the time when the farce of union is played out, we shall have to keep our secrets close, as they do jealously guard their own from us.

Although nowhere near as new as some of the fledgling guilds that have come into being since the end of the Century Wars, the Engineer's Guild is certainly not much older, barely more longstanding than our own enterprise. They were originally formed just prior to the beginnings of the conflict, as siege engines and fortifications began to be constructed by the armies of the Sovereign States. Their principle craft was the technical knowledge and regulation of such constructions and the understanding of the forces that drive them.

All rather pedestrian to an Alchemist of course. Who truly cares to know precisely how a rope or lever will react under strain, or how much exact force is required to be able to counterweight an arm on a catapult? Their science is a trite and laborious one, entirely too immutable for my tastes. Advancement is far too slow and their agent's attitudes often boorish and condescending, especially amongst the older Magisters and Artificers.

But to be fair and pay them their due, not all are that way.

In the years following the unification, they have concerned themselves with public developments, creating marvels of the new age in the cities across the Empire, uneasily nestled in with the cathedrals and castles. Whilst the elder members of their guild rest on their laurels at these magnificent accomplishments, the revolutionaries only see this as the beginning.

*Further to this, the keenest amongst them have lent their hand to construction of clockwork instruments and devices of far more interest to our enlightened minds. I am especially fascinated with the automaton that they call *Velocity*. In that I see the path to immortality, carefully laid before us.*

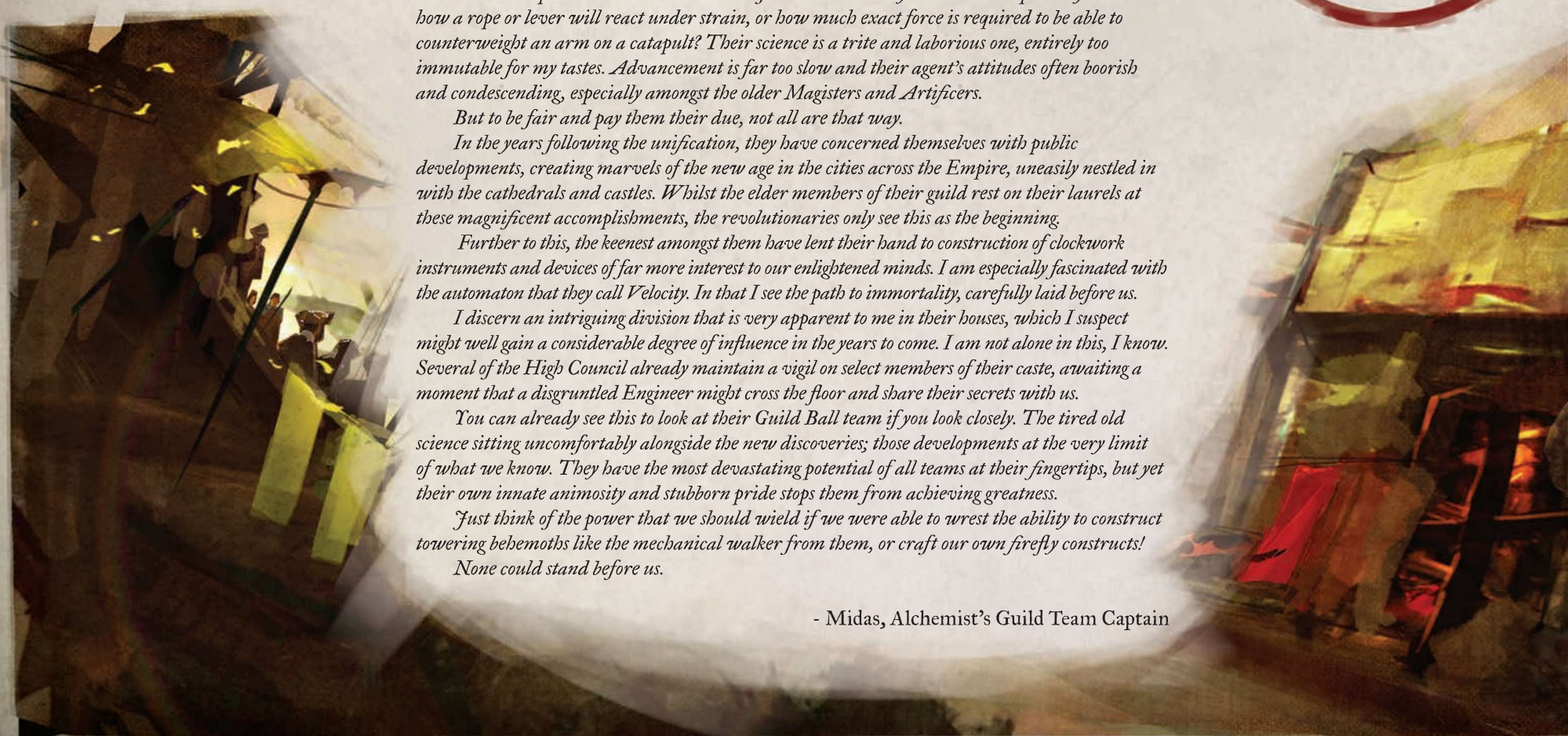
I discern an intriguing division that is very apparent to me in their houses, which I suspect might well gain a considerable degree of influence in the years to come. I am not alone in this, I know. Several of the High Council already maintain a vigil on select members of their caste, awaiting a moment that a disgruntled Engineer might cross the floor and share their secrets with us.

You can already see this to look at their Guild Ball team if you look closely. The tired old science sitting uncomfortably alongside the new discoveries; those developments at the very limit of what we know. They have the most devastating potential of all teams at their fingertips, but yet their own innate animosity and stubborn pride stops them from achieving greatness.

Just think of the power that we should wield if we were able to wrest the ability to construct towering behemoths like the mechanical walker from them, or craft our own firefly constructs!

None could stand before us.

- Midas, Alchemist's Guild Team Captain



MAINSRING

COLOSSUS

BALLISTA

RATCHET

VELOCITY

SALVO



TEAMS



Salvo
Ethraynnian, Human,
Male, Winger

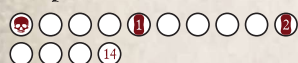
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV 6"/8" TAC 4 KICK 3/6" DEF 4+ ARM 1 INF 2/3

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Kick Bolt: 1 6"

Target enemy model suffers a [3"] Push directly away and [2] DMG.

Floored Bolt: 1 6"

Target enemy model suffers [1] DMG and the knocked-down condition.

Character Traits

Pumped!

Once per turn, this model may use Bonus Time! without spending MP.

Swift Strikes

This model may make a [1"] Dodge after causing damage to an enemy model.

SALVO THE MARKSMAN

For the young Salvatore, a street urchin from the streets of Annamura, nothing was of more interest than the great public works of the Engineer's Guild. Hand in hand with his older sister, he would rush around the city and visit each of the mechanical marvels in turn, the pair of them staring in rapt fascination. It was of no surprise to their parents when both apprenticed at the Engineer's Guild, first Quistis and then Salvatore a year later.

Quistis thrived and jealous of his sister's stories from the year he spent in sulky frustration, Salvatore threw himself into learning as much as he could, soon demonstrating an remarkable aptitude to his teachers and attracting the eye of the gruff Lord Artificer. Soon to considerable jealousy amongst his peers, he joined his sister as a second apprentice to Ballista, a much vaunted role within the guild and marked for greatness.

No man could have been more proud when Ballista first took on the mantle of Guild Ball captaincy than Salvatore and then again short time after, when his master adopted Quistis into the team. Watching each match from the sidelines, Salvatore at last found a rival for his attention to engineering in the game which fascinated him.

After his first game, he retired to the workshop and began to develop his own weaponry to take to the field himself, based upon the huge crossbow that Ballista favoured. Too heavy for the sleight young man to wield, instead he developed two much smaller handheld variants, miniaturised versions of a standard crossbow.

He would get his place in the side unexpectedly and in the worst way possible.

In the aftermath of Quistis' death, Ballista sat and quietly talked to Salvatore. His master had long since become more a father figure to him than his biological father and in the kindly, soft words there was the promise of vengeance that Salvatore wanted. He accepted, becoming both first apprentice and Guild Ball player in one.

Since then, Salvatore has taken to the pitch as Salvo the Marksman, each game viewed through bitter eyes that perceive the sport entirely differently to how he had previously. For Salvo, the machines of the Engineer's Guild only now have one goal.

Domination.

VELOCITY QUISTIS REBORN

Velocity
Ethraynnian,
Mechanica, Striker

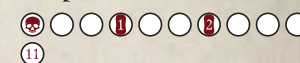
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV 6"/8" TAC 4 KICK 4/8" DEF 5+ ARM 0 INF 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Nimble: 1 S Yes

This model gains [+1] DEF.

Character Traits

Close Control

Once per turn, this model may ignore the first Tackle Playbook result against it.

Reanimate

Once per turn, When this model is reduced to [0] HP, before suffering the taken-out condition recover [3] HP and remove all conditions.

Following the tragic death of the young apprentice Quistis, Ballista took to his workshop for several long weeks whilst he healed, even once his body had recovered from the accident. The guild's Magisters despaired that the Lord Artificer might never be drawn out from his lamentations.

Salvo, also keenly affected by his sister's death dwelt on his loss, but instead planned a tremendous memorial to her life, a celebration of all that she had promised. Whilst his master locked himself away from the world, so too did Salvo shut himself in the workshop. But whilst Ballista raged and spat bile, Salvo constructed his tribute, a mechanical figure in Quistis' image.

Even in his self imposed solitude, Ballista eventually noticed the absence of his apprentice. He found him as Salvo had at last exhausted his own ability to work with the metals and gears of his trade, the project limited from achieving his vision by his inexperience. Ballista might have chafed at his apprentice's forthright nature on occasion, but never had he been a man to mistake devotion or loyalty when he saw it. On that day, the pair vowed to see the completion of the manikin.

With Ballista's considerable skill and knowledge, suddenly Salvo found the project launch forward in leaps and bounds. Each day brought new understanding, as Ballista taught him the practices and science of the craft. The Lord Artificer's influence opened new avenues with previously aloof workshops across the land, which now sent materials and pieces to fit into the figure. As they progressed, both men knew that they were likely constructing the most vital invention of their lives, with the potential to change the world forever.

At last, the project was finished. Both men wept to see its completion, as the figure began to move. Slowly at first and unsteady, but quickly adopting a fluidity and grace which neither had dreamed possible from a mechanical automaton. Soon there was only a simple elegance as it darted around like the fastest flashing steel of a duellist.

In Velocity, Quistis lives on, as the fallen have achieved immortality.

Colossus

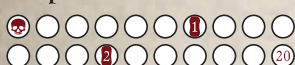
Raed, Human, Mechanical, Melee Zone - 2"
Central Midfielder Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 5 4/6" 2+ 1 2/3

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Ramming Speed: 1 S

During this model's Advance this activation, any enemy model whose base is touched suffers a [2"] Push directly away. A model can only be affected by this Character Play once per turn.

Smashed Shins: 6 P Yes

Target enemy model suffers [-4/-4"] KICK.

Character Traits

Close Control

Once per turn, this model may ignore the first Tackle Playbook result against it.

Light Footed

This model ignores the movement penalty while moving through rough-ground.

Tough Hide

Enemy Plays that cause damage or Playbook damage results targeting this model are reduced by [-1] DMG.

COLOSSUS ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION

Not every Guild Ball team in the Empire of the Free Cities can boast that they possess a monster amongst their number such as Boar, Ghost or Katalyst. Such a disadvantage can often be the undoing of a lesser side, as they are simply muscled off of the pitch by a more aggressive play style. This was something which Ballista was acutely aware of when he adopted the mantle of captain and refused to let become a disadvantage for the Engineer's Guild.

After a short period of deliberation on the issue, Ballista decided that he would bend his considerable skill to crafting a new type of war machine to answer this deficiency. It was to be as devastating as the enormous siege engines that he had once delivered to the Sovereign States during the Century Wars; on a considerably smaller scale to allow for mobilisation during the game. The resulting triumph astounded supporters and critics alike, and forced the other guilds to take notice of the Engineer side at once.

The Colossus is an unstoppable juggernaut on the pitch, slamming the opposition aside with its sheer bulk and power. Eschewing the brute force approach of other teams, Ballista has insisted that his finest creation be able to use his strength for the benefit of the team as a whole. Through gruelling months of practice Colossus has become a ball playing marvel, utilising great reach and height to protect and deliver the ball wherever it is required.

The current driver of the Colossus is a man named Axle, an enthusiastic Raed Engineer that worked on the project with Ballista from its beginnings. For some, the inherent danger of operating a machine such the Colossus would likely cause them to reconsider volunteering to do so; especially given the fate of the first driver, torn to pieces when a part of the drive train detached during a match. But Axle is only fearless as he faces down the opposition each game, dismissive of the potential danger.

And resolute Axle must be, for all of which the device houses immense destructive power, it also attracts the attention of the most dangerous figures in the world of Guild Ball, each of which would sincerely like to be the one to topple the Colossus.

RATCHET THE MAVERICK

Not for the first time that day, Ratchet cursed Ballista's lack of inventiveness. Everything was always so rigidly limited by old regulations and practices, most of which as far as Ratchet was concerned were long out of date or obsolete. It took an age to achieve anything under Ballista's leadership. The man was so ponderously slow in everything, his mind dull witted and unable to grasp even the basic principles of the new discoveries that were being made daily in the larger city guild houses.

This was not why he had left his homeland of Indossa, travelled halfway around the world and learnt a new language. He had come to escape the torment of being overshadowed by backwards thinking in a wretched and forgotten place, filled with minds concerned only with the words of their prophets and gods; only to find that here, despite being so very close to enlightenment, individuals like Ballista barred his way still.

At least he had managed to make some impression and advancement. His first creation, a tiny automaton in the shape of a man which moved on tracked wheels had been greeted with mixed reception and was quickly forgotten. But Ratchet had learned from that failure.

The Mainspring device was his finest creation yet and had met with much greater success. The simple introduction of outlawed explosives and a handful of design changes had created a powerful new weapon. He didn't care for the protests of the old guild members whom remembered the horrors of when such materials were implemented during the Century Wars. They were short sighted, stuck in the past. Ratchet grasped at the future.

With significant backing and new power, he had manoeuvred into a position on the Guild Ball team, better so that he would be able to administer the dangerously volatile creatures first hand, rather than risk passing his knowledge on to another. Ratchet jealously guarded his secrets and didn't trust anyone other than himself.

He would use the Mainspring to propel himself further up the ladder of advancement within the Engineer's Guild. There would come a day when the old devices and instruments would be seen for what they were, outdated relics of a time past, along with those that hid behind them. The time was to look forward, the path of mankind at last to be wrested from secular isolationism through violent invention.

Ratchet

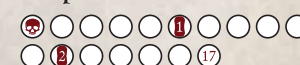
Indar, Human, Male, Defensive Midfielder
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5"/7" 4 4/6" 3+ 1 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Fixer: 1 4"

Target friendly [Mechanical] model recovers [2] HP and removes all conditions. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Long Bomb: 1 12"

If this model is in possession of the ball-token, choose a target-spot and scatter the ball from that location using the standard-scatter.

Blast Earth: 2 10" AOE 5"

All models hit suffer [2] DMG. This ongoing-effect AOE is rough-ground.

Character Traits

Creation [Mainspring]

Once per turn, this model may spend [2] MP during its activation to remove the taken-out condition from the friendly named model and place it in base contact with full HP. The named model is not allocated Influence this turn but may activate as normal. Models created by this ability do not generate VPs.

Heroic Play

Overclocked

Choose a target friendly [Mechanical] model within [4"] that hasn't activated, it may Sprint or Charge without spending Influence in its next activation. At the end of its activation it suffers the taken-out condition.



TEAMS



THE UNION



Who are the Union? A mismatched bunch o' mercenaries, scum and criminals for the most part. You wouldn't want to meet any of them in a dark alley late at night.

Nobody really knows when orders from above won't turn up and you'll have one of them playing for you. How it is that they manage to worm their way into everyone's teams is beyond my ken. Something to do with the lads high up in the guilds is all anyone can tell you, and even that's probably guesswork more than truth.

All I know is that you never trust them. Watch them carefully, even when they're on your side; they might not be next time around.

- Flint, Mason's Guild Vice Captain



RAGE

HEMLOCKE

FANGTOOTH

DECIMATE

MINX

AVARISSE
& GREED

BLACKHEART

GUTTER

SNAKESKIN

MIST

COIN



TEAMS



Blackheart
Unknown, Human, Male,
Captain, Central Midfielder

MOV 5"/7" TAC 6 KICK 3/6" DEF 3+ ARM 2 INF 4/6

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays

Misdirection:

Target enemy model loses [1] Influence. This model may immediately allocate [1] Influence to a friendly guild model within [4"].

Commanding Aura:

An Attack made against an enemy model within this aura gains [+1] TAC and [+1] DMG to Playbook damage results.

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

Character Traits

Shadow Like
At the start of this model's activation, it may make a [2"] Dodge.

Legendary Play

Strike from the Shadows [8" Pulse]
Choose either [+1] DEF or immediately making a [2"] Dodge. Friendly guild models within the pulse gain the chosen benefit.

BLACKHEART, THE PIRATE KING UNION TEAM CAPTAIN

No one knows where he came from, grew up, or how it is that Blackheart became Pirate King of the seas. I think just about every Sovereign State has either disowned him or flat out denied having anything to do with him; he's probably robbed each of them blind too.

Sound dramatic young blood? Pray that you never cross him. The day that the man gave up the life of a pirate and became a renegade mercenary was the day that shipping became a safe profession at last. Even the Lords of the Deep would not defy that man. They say that when he put in for the last time, he stowed her in a safe place to return to someday and then murdered the entire crew so that none might learn of his ships whereabouts. Only spared the first mate and that cursed devil snake of his.

He roamed the land as a warlord then for months. Terrorised the villages, the towns, threatened entire Sovereign States. We all feared that he might even reignite the Century Wars during the dark days, when no one knew where or when he would strike and his army just kept growing. Then silence. Somehow, he made an entire army disappear. Probably killed them down to the last man same as his crew, kept all the booty for himself. Anyone else, you'd laugh that notion off. Not him.

Why did he take up the mantle of a Guild Ball Captain? Your guess is as good as mine. I can tell you that the day that he marched onto the pitch was the day that I almost reconsidered my retirement. I very much doubt that he holds any affection for this game. I don't even know how his team manages to play without the backing of a guild. If you could, then I imagine the clever man could rake in a pretty penny or two that way. I think that is what led him to us.

Wealth is the only thing that drives Blackheart and his name is apt indeed. If you are in his way, then he will end you in a heartbeat, or send one of his crew to do the dirty work for him. Terrible group they are. And they turn up everywhere. I've seen all of them play on different teams. Even us. I don't know how it happens, but their loyalties are as flexible and worthless as their words. Don't trust any of them young blood, even if they're on your side. Word is that they all operate for some grand spymaster, who can influence even the guilds.

I don't much like the sound of that at all. And I don't dare ask.

I'm sure that he'll move on sooner or later to somewhere he can make more money. Hopefully for all of our sakes, in my lifetime. Same as when he left the seas, Guild Ball will be a safer game without his threatening shadow looming over it.

But I wish the sadistic bastard had never come here in the first place.

- Greyscales, Fisherman's Guild Vice Captain

COIN, HORRIFIC SERPENT UNION TEAM MASCOT

Coin is a huge snake that Blackheart feeds his fortune to, from an exotic isle far outside of the boundaries of any Sovereign State. A monstrous creature itself before the horror inflicted upon it by Blackheart; it easily exceeds the size of the closest serpent native to the Empire of the Free Cities. Wildly dangerous to any other creature that might make the mistake of crossing its path, even Blackheart is careful to treat the serpent with caution. There is no love for his unorthodox bank, which he daily subjects to the suffering of being forced to swallow indigestible gold. The alien eyes of the snake show no comprehension of Blackheart as anything other than the source of its torment, as he has been for so many years now.

Coin

Unknown, Animal, Mascot

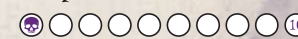
Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV 5"/7" TAC 2 KICK 1/4" DEF 4+ ARM 1 INF 1/2

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays

Hamstring:

Target enemy model suffers [-4"/-4"] MOV.

Character Traits

Bag of Coffers
Once per turn, target friendly non-[Captain] guild model within [4"] gains [1] Influence and can use Bonus Time! without spending MP.

Follow Up
After the enemy model performs an Advance that takes it out of this model's melee zone, this model may immediately move its base-move directly towards it.

COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Hamstring: P Yes



Gutter

Erskirii, Human,
Female, Central Midfielder

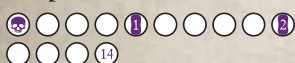
Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 5 3/6" 4+ 1 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Chain Grab: 1 / 6" 6" Yes

Target enemy model suffers a [4"] Push directly towards this model and [1] DMG.

Scything Blow: P

All models within this model's melee zone suffer [3] DMG.

Character Traits

Selective
[Brewers, Butchers, Engineers, Fishermen]
This model can also play for the named teams.

Lifedrinker
When this model damages one or more enemy models, it may recover [2] HP.

Anatomical Precision
During an Attack from this model, enemy models suffer [-1] ARM.

GUTTER THE BROKEN

I heard that she was a princess once, from one of the Sovereign States in the north, out Erskirad way. Then, as part of a raid, she gets captured by Blackbeart, who intends to ransom her off; thing is, northern nobles are even more ruthless than he is and a female heir is worth nothing really. So Blackbeart never got his coin for this one. So he keeps her locked aboard his ship's lower decks, barely feeds her, takes his fill of her every night for a month.

Then the damndest thing happens. Crazy bitch decides she's fallen in love with him. Totally broken down. Must be something snapped inside her head for that to happen. Maybe she wasn't too sane to begin with.

Anyhow, old Blackbeart is no fool. He knows how to exploit an opportunity when it comes his way. Makes her first mate. Who can you trust more than some batshit crazy bitch totally devoted to you? No one in a crew of cutthroat pirates certainly. He didn't look after her though. Oh no, she was thrown to the wolves. Rough ride for the poor little princess, I heard she was raped a dozen times, near got herself killed learning the ropes. But each one of those men that abused her started turning up dead, one after another. And each time, her smile got that little bit more deranged, a little more like she was enjoying seeing the fear in the eyes of the crew. Before too long, they're following her orders alright.

She's the only one he took with him when he gave up the pirate life and she's been with him ever since. I think she's given up pursuing him, but that hasn't stopped her butchering anyone that she thinks is a threat. She's worse than most of the crew on his ship ever were now. Swings that mean-looking hook around with far too much intent for my liking, and that knife always tickles your throat if she takes you down, like she wants you to know that she could end you right there if she wanted. Keep her away from Harmony and the boss, she might not stop for a woman.

She even plays the game. Now that's the real surprise. Gods only know what her warped mind understands about that. P'haps she's just trying to get his attention, turning up without him on teams. Maybe she's just following his orders. Could be something else, we're both far too sensible to even begin to understand the woman.

- Brick, Mason's Guild



MIST MYSTERIOUS SHADOW

First time I ever saw any sort of reaction from Siren over anything. You should have seen her, stopped dead in her tracks. I don't know who he is, but you can bet that there is some history there. The big lad knows him too. Different reaction though, just went thundering after him. Now that's another unusual sight. Kraken doesn't lose his calm like that.

Still, fair kept them both off of our backs for the rest of the game though. Whenever she got anywhere close enough for whatever it is that she does that makes a man lose his head and run out of position, he was there to spoil the moment. The last couple of times, I swear I heard her howl in frustration, but that must have just been the wind. Stuck up bitch never makes any sound. And there it was, every time he chased her off, Kraken shows up, following him, ignoring the rest of us. Never had a chance of catching him though; I would have laughed if not for the fact that if Kraken wanted to, he could probably smash out most of my teeth without even breaking a sweat.

That lad is fast; every movement is like watching water flowing, intangible and smooth. Never seems to make a mistake, get tired, just knows whenever anyone is trying to sneak up on him. Go to grab his cloak and he's not there anymore, he's behind you, and that stick smacks you across the temple. I saw Shark go for his legs, and he leapt over him, flipped in midair, to change direction and land perfectly. I don't think a normal man can do that. Trust me, I've travelled here and there, seen all sorts of sights and this is something I've never seen. I think if he wanted to, he could probably have played that game without us on his own and still won.

Just be glad he's on our side. For now.

- Flint, Mason's Guild Vice Captain

No hint of the mysterious Shadow's motive is discernible from watching him on the pitch of Guild Ball. Only one clue exists and that is the strange, almost otherworldly link between Mist and Siren. All that can be said is that whenever the two are on opposite sides of the pitch, that some fate or bond seems to bring them together. Whether the truth behind this link will be revealed or the secret will just deepen in the future, only time will tell.

Mist

Unknown, Human,
Male, Striker

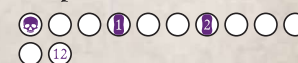
Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 4 3/8" 5+ 0 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Smoke Bomb: 1 8" AOE3

Models within this ongoing-effect AOE benefit from cover. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Where'd They Go?: 1 / 6" S

This model may make a [4"] Dodge. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Character Traits

Selective [Alchemists, Masons, Morticians]
This model can also play for the named teams.

Cover of Darkness
If this model starts an Advance while benefiting from cover, it gains [+2"/+2"] MOV.

Skilled within Shadow
This model gains [+2] TAC while targeting an enemy model benefiting from cover.



TEAMS



Snakeskin

Castellian, Human,
Female, Winger

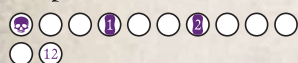
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 5 3/6" 4+ 0 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Nimble: 1 S Yes
This model gains [+1] DEF.

Clone: 2 / 0 S Yes

This model may ignore the first Character Play or Playbook result against it, then may make a [2"] Dodge.

Character Traits

Selective [Alchemists, Fishermen, Masons]
This model can also play for the named teams.

Venemous Strike
Enemy models suffer the poison condition when damaged by this model.

Charmed [Male]
This model gains [+1] DEF against every Attack and Character Play made by the named model type.

Shadow Like
At the start of this model's activation, it may make a [2"] Dodge.



THE CHAMELEON

'You ask the impossible!' Lord Chamberlain Vincent de Laurentis slammed his fist down onto the polished surface of his desk, causing the carefully arranged ornamentation to jump into the air, a couple of pieces clattering nosily onto the floor. 'I am at my wits end, trying to cater to your demands and now you bring me this... this...' he searched for the right word.

'Agent of the Union.' Longbanks quietly finished for him. Laurentis offered the third figure standing quietly in the corner of the room a baleful glance. At first, she had seemed an old crone, hooded and cowed, but on closer inspection, was in fact a young, powerfully built woman, sinewy and fluid underneath her robes. Laurentis turned his eyes back to Longbanks for a moment and he could have sworn that the woman disappeared. He sharply looked back into the corner and sure enough, the figure was gone. By the time he returned to Longbanks, she stood next to her employer.

'Who are you?' Laurentis rasped through clenched teeth, unease beginning to replace the anger.

'They call me Snakeskin. Nice to meet you Chamberlain. Don't get up on my behalf'. Her voice was an adder's hiss.

This woman was the vilest sort of degenerate, Laurentis decided. Not for the first time, he wondered where Longbanks found these people. Whatever Snakeskin was, she wore an infuriatingly insolent grin. A grin only matched by that of Longbanks, standing next to her.

'And you want me to commission your agent to become a member of the Fisherman's Guild team?' Laurentis' voice was incredulous.

'Nothing nearly so exciting. All I am telling you is that for your next game, Snakeskin here will be a starting member on the roster. We do not expect that this will detract from your performance, in fact, far from it. You will find her quite capable.'

'And who do you suggest that I bench to make way for her?' 'That is entirely your choice. It is of little matter to either myself or my associates.'

'How magnanimous of you.' Longbanks didn't bother with any acknowledgement beyond a curt nod of his head and a thick puff of smoke from the damnable pipe.

'We shall see you on match day Laurentis.' Longbanks quietly rose and left. Snakeskin seemed to fade backwards and then dissipate into the darkness. A pale-faced Laurentis held his face in sweaty palms and wept.

HEMLOCKE

PRIESTESS OF THE ANCIENT GODS

Hemlocke views the culture and politics of the Empire of the Free Cities and it's Sovereign States with almost total indifference. She cares little whether the people are united under one nation, or exist as separate communities. She does not trouble herself with the new philosophy of secular thought or mankind's new empirical science. The only position that she has ever expressed any opinion on is her spiteful disrespect for the institution of the Solthecian faith.

Hemlocke pays fealty to ancient and primordial divinities, those that the increasingly cosmopolitan citizens of the Empire of the Free Cities have largely forgotten. Those with shrines overgrown by weeds, monoliths toppled and smashed from decades of neglect, their names long since passed from memory.

To most of those that have dealings with her, Hemlocke is an eccentric hermit, a deluded outcast that seems an odd fit for the shadowy and sinister Union. Gentle and affectionate when administering medicines or harvesting herbs in villages and towns as she travels across the land, Hemlocke is unusually popular for a Union player, with a dedicated and loyal following in the Guild Ball stands. It would likely horrify her admirers to know the number of significant guild figures that she has eliminated at the behest of the gods.

Hemlocke infiltrates the guilds, following the pretence of indulging in their paltry games against each other and observes them warily. She is under no illusion that she might ever hope to destroy the powerful institutions herself, but then, she has no such motive. Hemlocke follows the agenda of her primeval masters, shown to her in dreams, hallucinations and omens. The universe is natural, a living entity that man is not meant to understand, even a priestess touched by the hand of fate.

Hemlocke is not content to merely watch the pathetic scabbling of man as he attempts to stamp a punitive and erroneous order upon his world, foretelling each step away from the ancient divinities and their natural order is one further along towards damnation. Fate itself answers only to the unpredictable whims of the old ones, those which mankind no longer serve.

The path of the future is set in the stars, which only Hemlocke can see.

Hemlocke

Eisnoran, Human,
Female, Defensive Midfielder

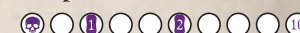
Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
6"/8" 3 3/6" 6+ 0 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Blind: 1 6" AOE₃ Yes
Enemy models hit suffer [-4] TAC and [-4"]/-4" MOV. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Smelling Salts: 2 4" AOE₃ Yes
Friendly models recover [2] HP and remove any conditions currently on them. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Noxious Blast: 2 8" AOE₃ Yes
All models hit suffer [2] DMG and the poison condition. Models entering or starting their activation in this ongoing-effect AOE suffer the poison condition. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Character Traits

Selective [Alchemists, Brewers, Fishermen, Hunters]
This model can also play for the named teams.

Magical Brew
Once per turn during this model's activation, it can remove any conditions currently on it.



Rage
Castellyian, Human,
Male, Attacking Midfielder

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
5/7" 6 2/6" 4+ 0 1/1

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Tooled Up: 1 4" Yes
Target friendly model gains [+1] DMG to Character Plays that cause damage and Playbook damage results. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Concussion: 00 P
Target enemy model loses [1] Influence.

Character Traits

Selective
[Brewers, Butchers, Engineers, Morticians]
This model can also play for the named teams.

Maverick
This model cannot be affected by other friendly Plays or Character Traits.

Berzerk
During its activation, if this model damages an enemy model this turn, it can then make an additional Attack without spending Influence. This ability cannot generate a further Attack from itself.

Furious
This model may Charge without spending Influence.

Crucial Artery
Enemy models suffer the bleed condition when damaged by this model.



RAGE

THE OPPORTUNIST

Abendroth drew his cloak tighter to him and watched his breath as he exhaled. Down in the crypts, it was always so insufferably cold. He liked the quiet though. It made him smile to be so at peace among the dead.

'Don't do that too often. If the wind changes, you'll be stuck looking like one of the cadavers you Spooks stitch up'.

Abendroth scowled, his levity forgotten. 'Who are you, impudent scum?'

'Impudent I may be, but scum? I've been called worse.' The man chuckled, a dangerous rattle. 'But few have lived to do so again.'

The man's face was barely illuminated by the lantern that Abendroth held and not at all by the thick cigar which glowed warmly in the shadows. It stank. The Mortician made a note to have his servant throw out the clothes he was wearing after he retired this evening.

'Cease wasting my time and state your business.'
Abendroth had little patience for surprises.

'Longbanks warned me that you were the life and soul of the party. As per your agreement with the Union, you are to place me in your Guild Ball squad ahead of this week's game against the Mason's Guild.'

Abendroth had expected this. Union involvement in the game was becoming far too commonplace for anyone's liking. He had begun to wonder whether the enigmatic Longbanks was less wise than he had first attributed the man to be. Abendroth nodded. It would not do at all to show any inclination of these suspicions.

'We are understood then. Will you require anything else?'
The Union agent scowled. 'Just leave me on the pitch with that bitch and her lackeys. We have unfinished business.' The venom in his voice betrayed his hatred.

Abendroth felt that the man's openness was a weakness. 'Do you have a name?'

'Call me whatever, I have several.' the man sounded disinterested, quietly seething following his earlier outburst. Rage then, for a hotheaded fool.

'You may let yourself out in the same way that you let yourself in, whatever that might have been.' Abendroth was done here and left the man alone in the darkness.

FANGTOOTH

THE MONSTER

The rook stared at the impossibly huge bulk moving along the other side of the cobblestone path with what looked like aimless, directionless steps. Each was ponderously slow, a dull thud that echoed off of the walls of the buildings. For the moment, it hadn't seen him. He intended to keep it that way.

Where did this beast even come from? It certainly wasn't a regular player on the Mortician's roster that he'd seen before. Even Greyscales had never seen anything like this in all of his years playing Guild Ball and that was saying something. Even Kraken would have thought twice before throwing down with whatever that thing was.

He cautiously slunk back into the shadows of the alley, afforded one quick glance around the corner and then hit the ground running. As he sprinted across the path, his eyes never left the creatures back.

Without looking where he was going, the Fisherman ran straight into something at full speed. Winded, he fell backwards, letting out an audible cry, his arms flailing. The creatures meandering pace stopped. Agonisingly slowly, its head turned. Upon seeing the fallen player, the unsteady gait became long, tireless and menacing strides towards where he lay; doubled over and desperately trying to get his breath back.

This close, he could smell the enemy for the first time and that almost stopped him in his tracks, retching. Hand over his mouth; he frantically tried to rise on unsteady feet.

Too late, he looked up at the shadow looming over him and the large expanse of pasty, blotchy pink flesh, as the creature battered him into the ground with one big meaty fist. The rookie looked up through lidded eyes as he spat blood through his teeth and felt burning, searing agony from somewhere in his gut.

The creature impassively raised one huge foot up and stamped down hard onto the Fisherman's head with a horribly wet crunch.

As the lifeblood drained from the boy into the dirt, the red mist that flooded the creature's vision rage dissipated, along with the murderous rage. It listened carefully and its head turned slowly, looking for other stimuli. When it found none, it began its slow, methodical walk along the path again, the encounter quite forgotten.

Fangtooth
Ethraynnian, Human,
Male, Centre Back

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 40mm

MOV TAC KICK DEF ARM INF
4/6" 5 1/6" 2+ 1 1/3

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Blood: 00 P
Target enemy model suffers the bleed condition.

The Unmasking: 00 S Pulse 3"
All other models within the pulse suffer a [4"] Push directly away from this model and [3] DMG.

Character Traits

Selective [Brewers, Fishermen, Morticians]
This model can also play for the named teams.

Foul Odor [3" Aura]
The open-ground within the aura is treated as rough-ground.

Heroic Play

Fangtooth Unleashed [4" Pulse]
All friendly models within the pulse immediately suffer [5] DMG. This model gains [+2"/+2"] MOV and [+1] DMG to Character Plays that cause damage and Playbook damage results.



TEAMS



Decimate
Erskirii, Human,
Female, Winger

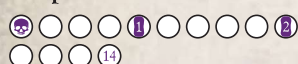
Melee Zone - 2"
Size - 30mm

MOV 6"/9" TAC 6 KICK 3/6" DEF 4+ ARM 1 INF 2/4

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Second Wind: 2 4" - Yes

Target friendly model may make a Jog at the end of its activation. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Thousand Cuts: 3 / 6" - Yes

Target enemy model suffers [-2] DEF and [1] DMG.

Character Traits

Selective
[Alchemists, Butchers, Engineers, Masons]
This model can also play for the named teams.

Anatomical Precision
During an Attack from this model, enemy models suffer [-1] ARM.

DECIMATE EXILE

The woman now known as Decimate is properly known as Svetlana Leonid Volstov III, a princess of Erskirii nobility. Cursed by the misfortune of a late birth into a large family with little interest in a fourth successor, Volstov had the run of a disinterested court and the pampered if insignificant life of one quickly forgotten by her parents.

Such an existence is but a paltry thing to a young, well educated girl with near unlimited potential. By the time she reached her twelfth name day, Volstov had already begun to involve herself in a far more exciting life amongst the underclass of the cities. It was not long before she discovered fraternity amongst the well funded and organised Brewer's Guild gangs. Ever the opportunist, Volstov rapidly rose within their ranks, her education and breeding aiding her in gathering significant influence.

When in 11C the Brewer's Guild house of Strakislov went to war against the Kersch guild house and successfully wrested control of the guild for themselves, they were not slow in consolidating power. After the ruthless purging of the Guild Ball team and the introduction of their own trusted 'family', the adolescent Volstov found herself a Guild Ball player, a career in which she thrived. Over successive seasons, Volstov evolved into the figure known to the crowds as Decimate, the duellist. With each passing match, Decimate would bask in more adoration of a roaring crowd and become more distanced from her associates.

This all changed after the Maldriven guild houses took control of the Brewer's Guild in a short, violent coup in 19C. As before, the new masters were quick to purge all trace of the former houses' influence within the corridors of power. Awoken in the early hours of the morning by a botched assassination attempt on her person, Decimate fled into the night.

A year later, Decimate took to the pitch in her first game as a free agent of the Union, flashing blades a swirling dance of destruction and mastery as ever they had been in the past. What her link to her new masters might be can only be guessed at, but she is as ever the arrogant, spiteful and dismissive noble that she always has been.

MINX FERAL HUNTER

The hated man came back from wherever he went when he left her alone in the darkness. The Hunter preferred the dark. It reminded her of the safe places that she laired in, deep beneath the ground. The only times that she felt safe enough to sleep, without keeping an eye open for danger. It was familiar to her, comforting.

The times when he led her out into the light places, with all of the pale skinned maggots staring at her behind their devil-kin faces, were agony. The brightness stabbed at her eyes, like knives driven into them. The feel of so much light from the golden devil in the skies, burning her skin. It was no way for anyone to live, in that torture. His children, the maggots, had been bleached white by it.

The hated man was the worst one, with his perfect white teeth and his unnatural smooth, pale skin. She would have given anything to bite into it, to rip it from his bones and wear what she didn't eat like a trophy. But that was only for worthy prey. And the man was no prey. Maggots were unworthy. So she just thought about how she would skin him while he was alive and make him watch her eat the scraps. The maggots had no taste for their own skin and blood. They were sickly, weak creatures that lacked the blessing of the Moon Goddess.

It angered her still that they had captured her. It angered her more that they kept her chained up, docile and toothless instead of killing her. But worse still was the time when the man did something in her mind and she couldn't resist him, even with all of her strength. The times when he told her to go and fight his enemies for him, like a contemptible coward. And she did, because the maggot had made her weak somehow, had wormed his way into her head. The best the Hunter could do was to give in and just live for the thrill of the moment, drawing out their blood and taking scalps.

Hollow. It was all hollow. None of it was what she wanted. When he would return her to the darkness, he would smile at her and pat her head like the Hunter was a dog. She would be forced to look at him all of the time, waiting until he left and released her, then the Hunter would shame herself by crying like a youngling.

But she would not break. He was a maggot, like all of the rest, and she would escape and kill them all.

Minx
Unknown, Human,
Female, Winger

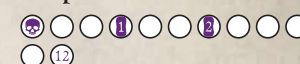
Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV 7"/9" TAC 5 KICK 2/6" DEF 4+ ARM 1 INF 2/2

Playbook



Hitpoints



Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Marked Target: 1 / 8" - Yes

Friendly models who declare a Charge against the affected enemy model gain [+0"/+2"] MOV. This Character Play can only be used once per turn.

Screaming Banshee: 6" P - Yes

Target enemy model suffers [-4"/-4"] MOV and [2] DMG.

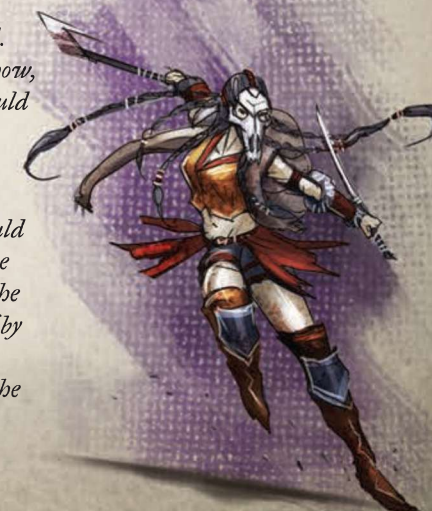
Character Traits

Selective
[Butchers, Hunters, Masons, Morticians]
This model can also play for the named teams.

Furious
This model may Charge without spending INF.

Damaged Target
When this model performs a Charge against a damaged enemy model, it gains [+0"/+2"] MOV.

Follow Up
After the enemy model performs an Advance that takes it out of this model's melee zone, this model may immediately move its base-move directly towards it.



AVARISSE & GREEDE

PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS FOR HIRE

Everyone in the underworld knows Avarisse and Greede. Innumerable are the crimes, sins and vices of this pair. They've probably been down in the slums of every city of every Sovereign State in service of their 'Principles'. I don't think that they have any scruples. They must have worked just about every shitty job going. I've seen them be bodyguards for a gang boss, henchmen for another. Heard about them involved in extortion, racketeering, human trafficking, narcotics, procuring and good old fashioned murder. Don't think that list is everything either. Bound to be more I've missed off. If you have the money and the contacts, then they'll work for you. Even in a den of vipers like the Union, those two stand out as having the most flexible loyalties.

They're a weird pair. No one has ever felt the need to ask them how they met or why they work together. It's not as simple as Greede being the brains like you might think. Oh, he's the clever one, you can see it in those beady yellow eyes of his. Always moving, scheming, evaluating and watching everyone. Talks like he's real educated too, most of the words out of his mouth you won't ever have heard before. But Avarisse is more than just muscle to go with that. Don't talk unless spoken to, but underestimate him and his ruthless cunning at your own peril. Got himself a real sadistic streak.

How it might be that they became involved in actually playing Guild Ball is probably the only mystery about them. They used to run a gambling den for the game I remember, down Skald way. That was years ago, when I was inside. But playing and pushing are two very different things. Bet they earn a pretty penny when they take to the pitch, only way I can see they'd bother. It's not love of the game for sure, I've never seen either one even look at the ball.

Word is that first time anyone saw them, crowd laughed at the contraption that Avarisse wears to carry Greede around in, and at the funny little man giving the big lad orders. They stopped that alright, about five minutes later when Avarisse stove in some poor mook's skull; just killed him dead in front of the crowd. Now they don't laugh, cheer, or anything. Good thing that they don't show up much on the pitch at least, sours the game. Behind the scenes? Now that's another story.

- Flint, Mason's Guild Vice Captain

Greede
Raed, Animal,
Male, Striker

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 30mm

MOV	TAC	KICK	DEF	ARM	INF
4"/5"	5	4/4"	5+	0	1/4

Playbook

1	<	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Hitpoints

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Where'd They Go! 1 / 2 S

This model may make a [4"] Dodge. This Character Play may only be used once per turn.

Rabid Animal: 2 P Yes

Target enemy model suffers [-4"/-4"] MOV and the poison condition.

Character Traits

Selective [All Guilds]

This model can also play for the named teams.

Bench

This model does not start on the Pitch and does not count towards your maximum team size allowance.

Attach [Avarisse]

During the Maintenance Phase before Influence is generated, if this model is in base contact with the named model, it may remove all damage and conditions and remove itself from the Pitch. If this model is in possession of the ball, move the ball-token to the named model.

Defence Support [Avarisse]

While within [4"] of the named model, this model gains [+1] DEF.

Crazy

Once per activation, this model may suffer [3] DMG to gain [+3] TAC for the remainder of this activation.

Avarisse
Raed, Human,
Male, Centre Back

Melee Zone - 1"
Size - 40mm

MOV	TAC	KICK	DEF	ARM	INF
4"/7"	6	1/6"	2+	0	1/3

Playbook

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Hitpoints

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Character Plays COST RNG ZONE SUSTAIN

Singled Out: 2 P Yes

Friendly models gain [+2] TAC against target enemy model.

Character Traits

Selective [All Guilds]

This model can also play for the named teams.

Tough Hide

Enemy Plays that cause damage or Playbook damage results targeting this model are reduced by [-1] DMG.

Detach [Greede]

During the Maintenance Phase before Influence is generated, the named model may be placed on the Pitch in base contact with this model. If this model is in possession of the ball, it may move the ball-token to the named model.



TEAMS

