

BLOOD BOWL[®]



SPIKE!

THE FANTASY FOOTBALL JOURNAL



ISSUE
05

PACKED FULL OF
SAUSAGES & SQUIRRELS!

EYES ON THE PIES!
THE HALFLING HOPEFULS MAKE AN ENTRANCE!

MAGNIFICENT MOOTLANDERS!
DISCOVER THE STAR PLAYERS OF THE MOOT!

ISSUE FIVE!

EVEN MORE OFFICIAL CONTENT FOR THE GAME OF FANTASY FOOTBALL





HOGSTONE BLUEJELLY
HALFLING HEFTY,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



MIPPIN SNOOD
HALFLING HOPEFUL,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



ERNALD SPIRITBURNER
HALFLING CATCHER,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



LUMPIN HOOP
HALFLING HOPEFUL,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



'STUMPY' STUBFOOT
HALFLING HOPEFUL,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



BARTWEED CRUMLEBERRY
HALFLING HOPEFUL,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



'LEFTY' BOGGIT
HALFLING CATCHER,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



HANSHAW WHITECAKE
HALFLING HOPEFUL,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



TORK SMALLBONES
HALFLING HOPEFUL,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



ORDO STOUTWINE
HALFLING HOPEFUL,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



FERGUS HARBUCKLE
HALFLING HOPEFUL,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS



JINGO MERRYCHAP
HALFLING HEFTY,
GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS

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GREETINGS SPORTS FANS!

Wipe those greasy little fingers on your trousers and join us, as *Spike! Journal* journeys into the Moot to explore the world of Halfling Blood Bowl teams. Jiggling bellies, laborious breathing and sweaty upper lips are all the order of the day as we serve up a fatty feast of information on Blood Bowl's most enthusiastic players, proving that you don't need to be strong, fit, fast or even over four feet tall to play ball!

Who says Halflings can't play? Well, everyone, but they are only right most of the time. In truth, Halflings represent some of the greatest players to ever venture onto the pitch, embodying the finest qualities of the sport – bravery, enthusiasm, and an almost overbearing spirit of friendly fair play! Who cares that the world is out of scale with their ambitions? Halfling teams provide Blood Bowl coaches and fans alike with a worthy underdog to cheer for. They aren't the easiest of players to coax to victory, indeed, they often aren't the easiest of players to coax onto the pitch, but this is why they, more than any other Blood Bowl team, are beloved by all – they won't win often, but by Nuffle, they are fun!

So what awaits you in this issue? Apart from a revealing look at the game's most unlikely players and the land they call home, you'll find articles on Halfling greats. Puggy Baconbreath, for instance, is a true Blood Bowl giant (figuratively speaking, of course – I met him once and he was shorter than my sister!). Then there are legends like Captain Colander, known throughout the Old World for his skills on the pitch and... um... wearing a colander on his head,

or the magnificent Cindy Piewhistle (who we're featuring for her merits alone, not because Mindy slipped me a substantial bribe).

We've got the skinny (not literally) on famous Halfling teams such as the Greenfield Grasshuggers, we provide a glimpse into the more diminutive world of competitive violence and let's not forget our regular features, from Coffin Corner to Chat with the Rat, where our resident reporters dig down into the sport we all love and serve up some amusing and juicy tidbits. There's also Mindy Piewhistle's Dirt from the Dugout feature, without which we would all be worse off (it really was a sizeable bribe!). Finally, we have another thrilling instalment of Mighty Blow, brought to you by 'Portly' Pete Knifton and 'Famishing' Nick Kyme!

So don't wait an hour after eating, put on your loose-fitting pants and strap on a bib for our most rotund issue yet, all about the magnificent Mootlanders and their contribution to the glorious game of Blood Bowl!



Butty Baconfingers,
Guest Editor *Spike! Journal*

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HALFLING HEROES

It's been a trying few months for the staff here at *Spike! Journal*. We've been tirelessly researching some of the deadliest teams in the game in our ongoing efforts to educate and enlighten. We've been mutated, enslaved and laid low by illness. Not to mention the zombie in the outhouse that no one is willing to claim ownership of! Feeling that we deserved a more restful task, for this issue we packed our stout walking boots and tweed trousers (the ones with the elasticated waistband, obviously – Ed), and set off on our merry journey to the peaceful homelands of the genteel Halflings. Oh boy, were we poorly prepared for what we found there!

Of all of the races of the world to play Nuffle's great game, few inspire more confidence in their opponents than Halflings. These diminutive denizens of the Moot, a rural idyll nestled in the heart of the Empire, have for many centuries been best known to the wider world for their contributions to the culinary arts and their innate ability to relax and do absolutely nothing in the presence of even the most pressing of chores and tasks. Short, rotund and unathletic in the extreme, if ever a race was poorly designed by the gods to play Blood Bowl, the Halflings are it!



The Halflings of the Moot are renowned for being, broadly speaking, jolly fine folk. Gentle and easy going, Halflings make fine companions and good company. Spend a little time in Halfling society, though, and one is likely to find that a startling collection of bad habits and uncouth behaviours becomes readily apparent. Entertaining tellers of tall tales they may be (*read as "habitual liars" – Ed*), but Halflings are light-fingered little... characters, prone to stealing the cutlery and not paying their bill!

They enjoy fresh air, warm sunshine and lots of it, liking nothing more than lounging on the green grass of their homelands, or passing an afternoon in a quiet beer garden. Halflings are naturally indolent – preferring to while away the hours eating well and drinking better. Hard work and honest toil are viewed as fool's errands. Oddly, it has been said by many a scholar of such things that if Halflings would put as much time and energy into honest work as they do into poaching and pilfering, the Moot would be the richest and most powerful economy in the known world!

A traveller passing through the Halfling Moot will at first glance see a sparsely populated land, speckled with picturesque cottages and taverns. But a closer inspection reveals that the cottages are rundown and dilapidated, desperately in need of some form of upkeep and more than a little cleaning, whilst the taverns are bustling and well maintained. This is because these above-ground dwellings are sparsely populated; the vast majority of Halflings live in underground warrens, warm and fuggy burrows to which they retire in inclement weather and when the chill night air becomes too much for a drunk Halfling to bear. These burrows are usually full to bursting with the proud owners' many ever growing collections of... well, various items they haven't yet been able to fence. Halflings will 'collect' anything that is not fastened down, and over time many constantly extend their

underground homes to make room for their 'possessions'. Indeed, many a happy Halfling marriage has come about as the result of a young Halfling lad finding himself unexpectedly in the boudoir of a young Halfling lass as he goes innocently about the business of enlarging his holdings!

It is little wonder that Halflings enjoy Blood Bowl immensely – any excuse to sit around in the sun eating, drinking and viewing an impressive spectacle is to be grasped with both hands! They will follow most teams but are particularly loyal to their local franchise, be it a Halfling team based within the Moot or the one local to wherever their travels inevitably take them. But Halflings don't restrict themselves to simply spectating. Against the sage advice of other races, Halfling teams are a common sight. Groups of eager young hopefuls seeking fame and adventure, backed by a local business owner with grand dreams of merchandising rights, spring up on an almost daily basis. Most don't last long, it must be said. All burn brightly before their flame is extinguished, providing ample entertainment for the baying crowds. The limitless bravado and heroics of Halfling folk make their teams instant fan favourites – who doesn't want to cheer for the underdog? Some Halfling teams, however, make a lasting impression on the sport (*some merely leave lasting stains on the astrogranite – Ed*) and become household names, achieving a notable degree of success in spite of a heavy turnover of talent!

HALFLING HOPEFULS

Halflings flock to the game of Blood Bowl in their droves. True, most of them flock to the bleachers, but almost as many are drawn to the excitement of a career on the gridiron. They dream of fame, fortune and adventure, and rarely do they seem aware of the disadvantage they are at against much larger opposition. Many Halflings take the game of Blood Bowl

quite seriously, dedicating as much as 20 minutes every day to vigorous training. The relentless jollity and bravado of would-be Halfling Blood Bowl stars can seem surreal to many; they are oblivious to danger, seeming to believe that bad things don't happen to Halflings. Sadly, this is a belief many are disabused of very quickly!

HALFLING CATCHERS

Many a young hopeful will have come to the game via a circuitous route. Often they have dabbled as poachers or in other, more nefarious activities. When such criminal conduct catches up with a Halfling, there is only so far they can run on their short little legs. Many seek refuge within the ranks of Blood Bowl teams, protected by minders and teammates from angry local authorities. Halfling teams are always willing to turn a blind eye to a player's history if that player is fast, nimble and a good runner (for a Halfling, at least)!

HALFLING HEFTIES

Older, wiser Halflings are drawn to the game just as much as young, brash Hopefuls. Some Halflings may have played several games for one of the numerous start-up teams at their local pub, before the inevitable break-up of the team due to other commitments (*such as not wanting to miss an important meal – Ed*) or Halfling forgetfulness. These Hefties, as they are affectionately known, for the broader girth of the elder Halfling, bring a degree of calm and practical experience to their teams. Halfling Hefties may also be a bit tougher or better kitted out for the game, having picked up various pieces of equipment over previous seasons. But what they really bring is a sensible reluctance to participate in displays of aerial acrobatics and a desire to not get flattened into the turf!

TREEMEN

Treemen are most often thought of as coming from the realms of the Wood Elves, but in truth, they can be found dwelling deep in any of the large woodlands of the world. The dense arboreal lands that border the Halfling Moot, rich and full of life as they are, are home to a great many Treemen. Solitary folk, they prefer for the most part to remain within their forest domains but, being as protective as they are of their Halfling neighbours, many see it as a duty to accompany them abroad in their regular Blood Bowl adventures.

Consequently, it is common to the point of being normal for Halfling teams to enjoy the presence of a Treeman or two, adding some much needed power and solidity. That many Halflings are full of enough precocious bravado to fly through the air, thrown by a Treeman team-mate is both a tactic few can defend well against and a spectacle the fans delight to see! Their incredible might is a boon to any team and they more than any other Big Guy (*as such giant players are called by fans – Ed*) possess the strength and weight to halt an opposition advance. Often, a single Treeman can hold up an entire opposing offensive line alone, rooting themselves to the spot and becoming an immovable object against which all but the most unstoppable of forces will break.

FAMOUS HALFLING TEAMS

PINKFOOT PANTHERS

Hailing from Birnbaum, the Pinkfoot Panthers are a (currently) defunct team of very little note. So why do they feature in this list? Well, you may ask, readers! Some of you may remember that the Pinkfoot Panthers agreed way back in 2422 to play an exhibition match against an emerging Elven team. Little did the Panthers know, but that team was the Darkside Cowboys and that match was to announce the arrival of the Druchii on the world stage! The unfortunate Panthers were massacred to a Halfling and many of their loyal fans were spirited away to Naggaroth. The name of the Pinkfoot Panthers lives on, often reused as the franchise is picked up anew, but mostly immortalised by their sacrifice!

BLUEBAY CRAMMERS

The town of Bluebay sits on the banks of the Blue Reach river, a vital trade route through the Moot. It is very cosmopolitan, with a great many eateries populating its winding thoroughfares. The Crammers, named after their love of a good meal and their folks' refusal to leave any leftovers, are in turn a well-travelled and very urbane team. Touring widely and ever eager to visit new places and enjoy local delicacies, they have dined in every corner of the world. They don't often win many games, but they have had a jolly good time all the same. It is little wonder that this team has a firm following of fans eager to accompany them on the road!

MOOT MIGHTIES

Quite a rough and tumble team by Halfling standards, the Moot Mighties are another well-travelled Halfling squad. But where their countrymen may see the game as an excuse to eat well, see the sights and steal any small items of interest they find on their campaigning, the Mighties take pride in being a highly competitive side. Always well fancied in any tournament, the Mighties have wracked up an impressive tally of results, progressing to the second round of roughly half of the tournaments they enter! Sadly for these diminutive battlers, true glory has always remained just beyond their reach (*at about chest height to most of their opponents – Ed*).

TALLOW CANDLES

There is a saying in many parts of the Empire that if a Halfling isn't served their dinner promptly, they'll eat the candles! Scandalous as this suggestion may be, it's also very true – many a Halfling has moved on to the candles when the breadsticks are gone. The Tallow Candles, wanting to strike fear into their opponents, decided to turn this old saying on its head. Prior to every match, they line up in the centrefield to perform their battle dance and consume lit tallow candles! The spectacle has become quite a crowd favourite, but the effect of this ritual performance is, as may be expected, not quite as intimidating as the team seem to believe!



TEAM ROSTER

QTY	POSITION	COST (GP)	MA	ST	AG	AV	SKILLS	NORMAL	DOUBLE
0-16	Halfling Hopeful	30,000	5	2	3	6	Dodge, Right Stuff, Stunty	A	GSP
0-2	Halfling Catcher	50,000	5	2	3	6	Catch, Dodge, Right Stuff, Sprint, Stunty	A	GSP
0-2	Halfling Hefty	50,000	5	2	3	7	Dodge, Fend, Stunty	AP	GS
0-2	Treeman	120,000	2	6	1	10	Mighty Blow, Stand Firm, Strong Arm, Take Root, Thick Skull, Throw Team-mate, Timmm-ber!	S	GAP
0-8	Re-roll counters: 60,000 gold pieces each								

STAR PLAYERS



Puggy Baconbreath



Deeproot Strongbranch



Karla von Kill



Willow Rosebark



Morg 'n' Thorg



Neddley Verrüca



Cindy Piewhistle



Rumbelow Sheepskin



Big Jobo Hairyfoot



Captain Colander


NAME	PLAYS FOR	SKILLS	COST (GP)	MA	ST	AG	AV
Puggy Baconbreath	Halfling, Human	Block, Dodge, Loner, Nerves of Steel, Right Stuff, Stunty	140,000	5	3	3	6
Deeproot Strongbranch	Halfling	Block, Loner, Mighty Blow, Stand Firm, Strong Arm, Thick Skull, Throw Team-mate, Timmm-ber!	300,000	2	7	1	10
Karla von Kill	Amazon, Halfling, Human, Norse	Block, Dauntless, Dodge, Jump Up, Loner	220,000	6	4	3	8
Willow Rosebark	Amazon, Halfling, Wood Elf	Dauntless, Loner, Side Step, Thick Skull	150,000	5	4	3	8
Morg 'n' Thorg	Any except Tomb Kings, Necromantic Horror and Shambling Undead	Block, Loner, Mighty Blow, Thick Skull, Throw Team-mate	430,000	6	6	3	10
Neddley Verrüca	Halfling	Dodge, Loner, Secret Weapon, Stab, Stunty, Trademark Stilts (grants Leap and Very Long Legs)	70,000	5	2	3	6
Cindy Piewhistle	Halfling	Accurate, Bombardier, Dodge, Loner, Secret Weapon, Stunty	50,000	5	2	3	6
Rumbelow Sheepskin	Halfling	Block, Horns, Juggernaut, Loner, No Hands, Tackle, Thick Skull	170,000	6	3	3	7
Big Jobo Hairyfoot	Halfling, Ogre	Dirty Player, Loner, Stand Firm, Stunty, Tackle, Wrestle	120,000	4	3	2	8
Golden Era Star Player							
Captain Colander	Halfling	Catch, Disturbing Presence, Dodge, Fend, Jump Up, Loner, Regeneration, Right Stuff, Side Step, Stunty	100,000	6	2	3	7

TEAM SPOTLIGHT



GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS

Halfing Blood Bowl teams are nothing if not numerous. Indeed, every public house in the Moot is home to a succession of short-lived but enthusiastic amateur outfits. The vast majority of these teams, whilst followed energetically by the players' friends and family, are rarely seen outside of local fixtures against the neighbouring pub. In fact, most are unlikely to have been heard of in the next town or village, let alone within the wider world of Blood Bowl competition and fandom. But such teams are the lifeblood of Blood Bowl within the Moot. Forming in a flurry of excitement with grand plans and dreams of stardom, sadly most often disband just as quickly as they form, with players getting easily bored and drifting away after lunch.



One Halfling team that has survived, even flourished, beyond all expectation is the Greenfield Grasshuggers. Arguably one of the most beloved teams in the modern game, this venerable Mootland franchise can trace its origins as far back as the summer of 2418. The Grasshuggers were originally named the Greenfield Tumble Down Dicks after their home, the now legendary Tumble Down Dick's Coaching Inn (*apparently the landlord at the time, Ricard Whalloper, couldn't hold his beer – Ed*), where the team was founded.

This name was to change, however, when the freshly minted team played a friendly fixture against an amateur Human pub team from nearby Pfunzig. The name of this team and the eventual score have long since been forgotten, but what is remembered is that the eager Halflings were quite unprepared for what lay ahead. The Human side played a very physical game at a pace that the Halflings found quite terrifying. Within the first quarter of an hour, the Tumble Down Dicks were trailing badly, with several players recovering in the dugouts. Panicking, the Halflings famously took to prostrating themselves on the turf, digging in their fingers and toes, and screaming loudly when anyone approached. Ultimately this tactic proved futile, as the Tumble Down Dicks lost quite badly, but it did lead directly to the team's eventual name change (*or at least, that's the unsubstantiated rumour – Ed*)!

Perhaps unusually for a Halfling team, this early bad experience didn't deter the Grasshuggers. Even their new name, originally coined in mockery, became a badge of honour. The team persisted and did quite well in local Mootland fixtures. Within a few short years, they had become one of the most well known teams in the Moot, a fact that in itself brought the team more good fortune and secured its future fame and success. The team gradually became more professional in its approach to the game, its goals and its objectives. A more serious approach to signing new recruits to genuinely compete in Mootland competition led to the Grasshuggers securing the services of a young Puggy Baconbreath. Over the course of the next few seasons, the team's determination and drive began to pay off, and the Tumble Down Dick's Coaching Inn proudly unveiled a new trophy cabinet to house the squad's collection of awards (*which they were genuinely committed to starting – Ed*).

This competitive outlook and growing renown within the Moot led in turn to the Grasshuggers being approached by none other than Deeproot Strongbranch, the first of the mighty Treemen of the Altern Forest to take to the Blood Bowl pitch. His presence in the squad added some much needed muscle and stability, allowing the Grasshuggers to become a powerhouse within the Moot over the following years, winning numerous Thimble Cups and Stunty leagues. In the decades since, the Grasshuggers have grown in experience and expertise to eventually become the highly popular and competitive franchise they are today, a squad that has benefitted hugely from changes in the sport since the collapse of the NAF. Today, travelling widely and free to carefully select the competitions they participate in, even the most harsh of their critics must admit that the Grasshuggers are an ever-present threat that is bound to win a proper trophy one day!

COFFIN CORNER

In Coffin Corner, we remember those players that are no longer with us – because they were trampled into the pitch, torn apart or possibly set on fire!

CAKE WALK

We remember Halfling Runner Otto Wobblebelly of the Stunted Stoutfellows. During a game, Otto had the misfortune of not only being passed the ball, but catching it and drawing the attention of the entire opposing team. His pleas of “*Don't make me run, I'm full of cake!*” fell on deaf ears; though did in fact turn out to be true.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

We remember Woody Barkman, Treeman for the Pieboys. During a long and inconclusive game between the Pieboys and their rivals, the Mootlads, Woody fell asleep in the middle of the pitch. Rather than rouse the slumbering Treeman, the stadium owners simply moved the pitch slightly and turned Woody into a scoreboard!

A LOAD OF BULL

We remember Hef Horngar, Minotaur for the Dark Gods' Grovellers. Having had the misfortune to be knocked out cold by a Treeman, Hef woke up to find himself the main course in the Bluebay Crammers' post-game feast!

Have you witnessed any memorable deaths on the pitch – because *Spike! Magazine* wants to know! Send in your outrageous obituaries, funny fouls and mirthful murders to 'Coffin Corner, *Spike!* Tower, 30 Neustrasse, Altdorf'.

TEAM PROFILE: GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS

TEAM COLOURS: Green and yellow

OWNER: Ricard Whalloper II, Landlord of the Tumble Down Dick's Coaching Inn

HEAD COACH: Drago Foodcraver

PLAYERS: Halflings and Treemen

TEAM HONOURS: Halfling Thimble Cup Winners 2436, 2441, 2458, 2482, 2488, 2493;
Little Big Tour Champions 2465, 2473, 2480, 2486, 2489, 2493; Fighting Cockerel Classic Winners 2456,
2469, 2487, 2493

HALL OF FAME: Deeproot Strongbranch, Ernald Spiritburner, Bartweed Crumbleberry, Bungo Swifthand

SPIKE! TEAM RATING: 101

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2419 The Tumble Down Dicks officially change their name to the Greenfield Grasshuggers. This change heralds an age of professionalism and determination in players and staff alike. A new, extreme training regime is implemented, seeing Halfling players jogging around their training ground for as much as an hour a week (spread over seven days, of course)!

2434 The Grasshuggers become the first and, to date, only team to score two touchdowns where the ball hasn't touched the ground first. For the first, receiving against the Bluebay Crammers, the opening kick drops the ball into the waiting arms of an eager young Hopeful who is then thrown by Deeproot into the opposition end zone. The second, again courtesy of Deeproot's signature Halfling passing expertise, comes as the Grasshuggers kick to the Crammers. As the kick sails through the air, so too does a Halfling Catcher, landing ahead of the ball for a quick catch and second score! The crowd go wild and the Crammers go to lunch early!

2436 After a game that lasts for twelve days and is played out over 27 short drives, each separated by a large meal, heavy drinking session and a long nap, the Grasshuggers famously win their first Thimble Cup. Over the course of this festival of Blood Bowl, emergency reserves of food and drink run dangerously low – civil unrest becomes a genuine concern. The following year, the folk of the Moot stockpile many tonnes of baked goods and enough beer to float a battleship.

2482 Having signed and lost the famous Puggy Baconbreath within six months, the Grasshuggers set out to prove that they can compete in the big leagues. This results in the limit of sixteen players per team being introduced, and a change in regulations to allow Treemen to feature on Halfling squads within NAF competition following the death or serious injury of 743 Halflings from the team, its extended coterie of staff and dozens of willing fans from the stands at the hands of the Asgard Ravens Norse berserker team!

2493 The Grasshuggers enjoy their most successful season of open competition in team history. Having adapted well to the post-NAF world, they have learned which competitions to enter and which to avoid. Consequently, a fit and strong Grasshuggers squad romps to famous victories in the Thimble Cup, the Little Big Tour, the Fighting Cockerel Classic and place well in numerous other independent tournaments and short leagues.

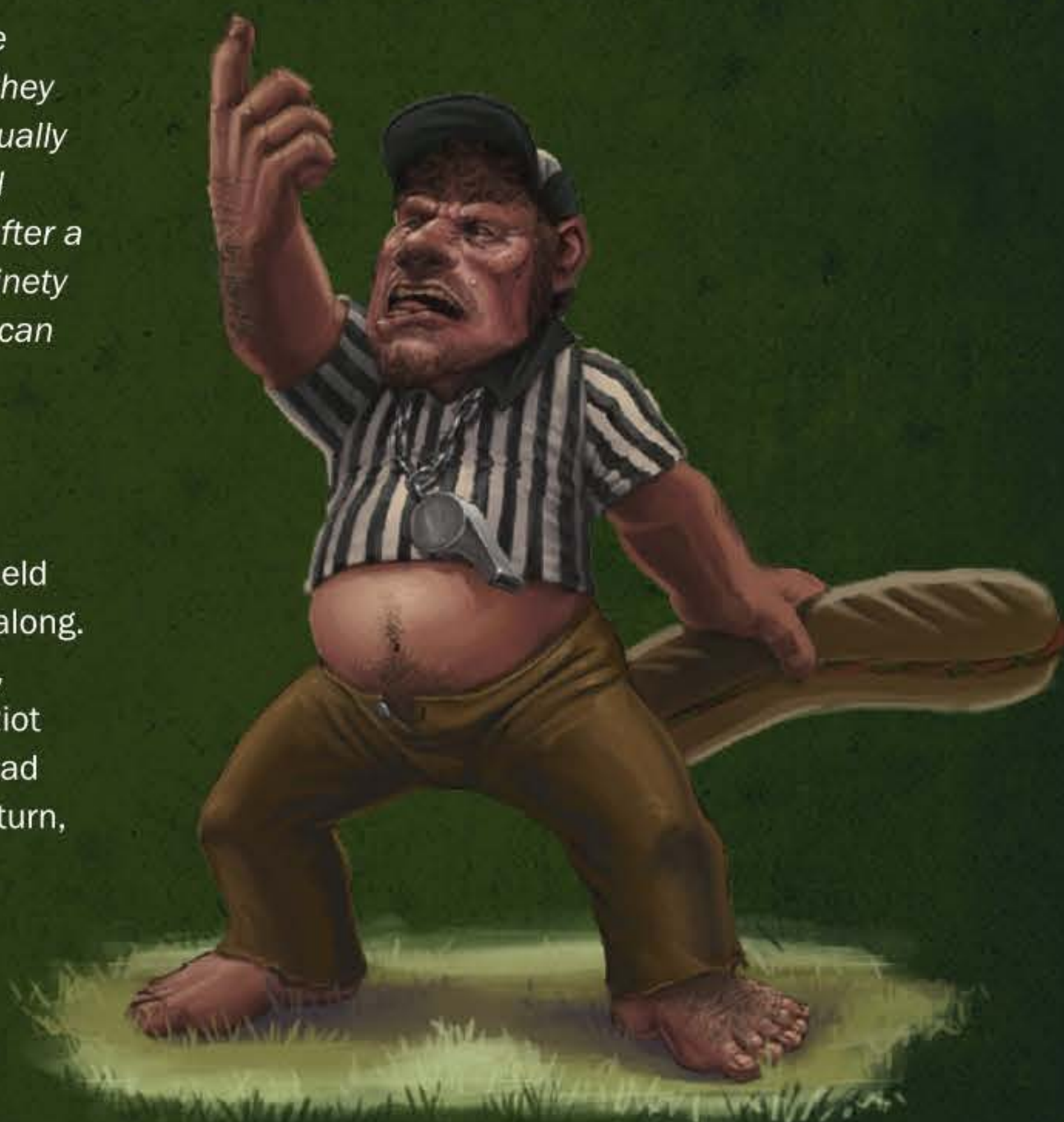


HALL OF FAME: GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS 2477-2478 SQUAD

NAME	POSITION	MA	ST	AG	AV	SKILLS
Deeproot Strongbranch	Treeman	2	7	1	10	Block, Mighty Blow, Stand Firm, Strong Arm, Thick Skull, Throw Team-mate, Timmm-ber!
Greybranch Oakwillow	Treeman	3	6	1	10	Mighty Blow, Nerves of Steel, Stand Firm, Strong Arm, Take Root, Thick Skull, Throw Team-mate, Timmm-ber!
Lumpin Hoop	Halfling Hopeful	5	3	3	6	Block, Dodge, Right Stuff, Stunty
Hogstone Bluejelly	Halfling Hefty	5	2	3	7	Dodge, Fend, Side Step, Stunty
Jingo Merrychap	Halfling Hefty	5	2	3	7	Dodge, Fend, Stunty, Wrestle
Ernald Spiritburner	Catcher	6	2	4	6	Catch, Dodge, Right Stuff, Sprint, Stunty
'Lefty' Boggit	Catcher	5	2	3	6	Catch, Dodge, Right Stuff, Side Step, Sprint, Stunty, Sure Feet
Mippin Snood	Halfling Hopeful	5	2	3	6	Diving Tackle, Dodge, Right Stuff, Stunty
Fergus Harbuckle	Halfling Hopeful	5	2	3	6	Dodge, Right Stuff, Stunty, Tackle
'Stumpy' Stubfoot	Halfling Hopeful	5	2	3	6	Dirty Player, Dodge, Right Stuff, Sneaky Git, Stunty
Bartweed Crumbleberry	Halfling Hopeful	5	2	3	6	Dodge, Leap, Right Stuff, Stunty
Hanshaw Whitecake	Halfling Hopeful	5	2	3	6	Dodge, Right Stuff, Stunty
Tork Smallbones	Halfling Hopeful	5	2	3	6	Dodge, Right Stuff, Stunty
Ordo Stoutwine	Halfling Hopeful	5	3	3	6	Block, Dodge, Right Stuff, Stunty
The Greenfield Grasshuggers	4 Assistant Coaches				3 Re-rolls	
Halfling Team	7 Cheerleaders				9 Fan Factor	
Head Coach: Drago Foodcraver	1 Master Chef 1 Halfling Hot Pot				Total Cost of Team: 1,900,000 gp	

TERRIBLE TIMEKEEPING: Halfling teams are notorious for the amount of time they waste before, during and after any game they participate in. Players, match officials, and even fans are habitually late for the kick-off. Breakfasts overrun, lunches, tea times and numerous other mid-match breaks play havoc with restarting after a whistle. Matches even end early for happy hour! With almost ninety years of practice, the Grasshuggers have become a team that can waste time like no other.

If the Greenfield Grasshuggers coach wins the FAME roll during the Pre-match sequence, then rather than rolling on the Kick-off table, at the start of any drive, the coach of the Greenfield Grasshuggers may choose to waste some time or hurry things along. No dice are rolled and the kick-off event is automatically a Riot, as if a 3 had been rolled. Additionally, rather than resolve the Riot normally, the Greenfield Grasshuggers coach may choose instead to move both team's Turn markers forwards or backwards one turn, regardless of the current turn number.



STAR PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

Can't talk now my luvverly, the hot buffet be getting cold and the cold buffet be getting hot!

Puggy Baconbreath, arriving at the 2496 ABC Sports Personality of the Year Awards ceremony

The game of Blood Bowl is full of celebrities. Many a player's star rises quickly as the result of a good game or two, or they secure their notoriety after a stellar season. Others gradually become famous after performing reliably over several years, earning the praise of pundits, commentators and loyal fans alike. Others become infamous, rather than famous, in the wake of a deed so dirty as to live long in the memory of every Blood Bowl fan.

And then there is Puggy Baconbreath. Adored by his loyal fans, loved by his many team-mates and respected by all within the game, the star Blitzter of the Greenfield Grasshuggers has dominated the Halfling game for several decades. Read on, stout fellows of the *Spike! Journal* readership, and we'll tell you the tale of Puggy Baconbreath!

SPIKE! STAR PLAYER FOCUS:

PUGGY BACONBREATH

Puggy has, over the course of many seasons, become a true legend of the modern game. Old even by the standards of the long-lived Halflings, yet still as hale and hearty as one half his age, he shows no sign of slowing down in spite of reportedly having broken every bone in his body at least once! Some say that he will only announce his retirement when he has lifted all four Majors, and until then he refuses to let even his advancing years slow his career! In truth, Puggy has tried to announce his retirement several times, but has always been lured back by sponsors and generous transfer fees. He has played for many a team under regular contract or as a freebooting mercenary, and regularly throws in his lot with Halfling teams of the Moot or with Human teams of the wider Empire and beyond. His flexibility as a player is quite remarkable.

Puggy's work ethic is rivalled only by his love of competition. If ever a reason for his success and longevity could be pinpointed, this would probably be it (*oh, not his incredible luck then?* – Ed). Where other Halflings treat Blood Bowl as a jolly jape, Puggy treats the game

as a serious business. Not for him the 20 minute training regimes of his kin. Puggy has been known to spend as much as 45 minutes to an hour every day practicing his art. More surprising still, he is rumoured to get up early every morning and go for a run around his home village! This rumour is largely unconfirmed though, as there are few witnesses around before eleven o'clock!

This approach to his career in the game is most evident when Puggy takes to the pitch. In all his years playing the game, he has never once nipped off mid-drive for a hotdog (*no, but he's a swine for wandering away to chat with the cheerleaders between plays* – Ed). Where other Halfling players are habitually late for kick-off due to their interminable meals, Puggy is always on the field on time, carrying his plate with him if needs be!

Puggy loves winning, and treats the game with a serious demeanour. Where other Halfling players frustrate and annoy opponents and officials alike, Puggy displays a professionalism and will to win that truly sets him apart. It is little wonder then that today he commands a healthy appearance fee for one so small!

PUGGY BACONBREATH

HALFLING

140,000 GOLD PIECES



MA	ST	AG	AV
5	3	3	6

SKILLS:
BLOCK, DODGE, LONER,
NERVES OF STEEL, RIGHT STUFF, STUNTY

TEAMS:
HALFLING, HUMAN

SPIKE! THE FANTASY FOOTBALL JOURNAL

AGE: 116
HEIGHT: 3 FT 9 INCHES
WEIGHT: 93 LBS
ORIGINATING TEAM: BLUEBAY CRAMMERS
POSITION: BLITZER

CAREER TOTALS: RUSHING 468
PACES; RECEIVING 1 PASS FOR 8
PACES AVERAGE; 671 TOUCHDOWNS, 3
INTERCEPTIONS RETURNED FOR 17 PACES;
42 PLAYER FATALITIES; 3,236 LBS OF
SNACKS CONSUMED

AWARDS: MCMURTY'S SPAMBURGERS
PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2466, 2470, 2479,
2490; INGRID THE PIOUS AWARD FOR
INSPIRATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT 2471, 2483;
SPIKE! MAGAZINE TROPHY OPEN WINNERS
MEDAL 2488; BLOOD BOWL
WINNERS MEDAL 2485



PUGGY BACONBREATH CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2421 Puggy Baconbreath signs for the Bluebay Crammers after impressing the team's council of coaches at the end of season 'Shove' (*like the traditional Crush held at the high temple of Nuffle, but held in the Moot instead – it involves more food than football – Ed*). This is a fortuitous decision for Puggy, as in signing for the Crammers he turns down an offer from the Pinkfoot Panthers!

2443 The Crammers romp to victory in the Halfling Thimble Cup. Puggy secures himself lasting fame within the Moot, scoring six touchdowns over the course of this festival of Blood Bowl and, more importantly, consuming no fewer than 148

courses during the numerous end of drive meals, not counting breakfasts or suppers! The fans are shocked by his refusal to stop mid-drive for a snack. Many wonder where he finds the energy!

2482 In search of fresh challenges, Puggy leaves the Crammers for the Grasshuggers. But unable to settle into his new squad, Puggy quickly makes the momentous decision to leave the Grasshuggers and the Stunty leagues behind to pursue a career as a freebooter for various NAF teams after interest from several famous Human squads on the circuit. This timely decision to expand his horizons comes shortly before the Grasshuggers' infamous first foray into the big leagues and their now legendary match against the Asgard Ravens.

2485 Puggy lines up alongside the Reikland Reavers for a few games in the early part of the season. This proves to be a wise choice, as he is now eligible to play for them later in the season. Signed up again ahead of the play-offs, Puggy helps the Reavers to a famous victory, the unexpected addition of a diminutive Halfling to the team opening up passing plays that their opponents are ill-prepared for!

2488 Following the shambolic Blood Bowl Championship game earlier in the year, spirits within the sport are low. Many shell-shocked teams make the pilgrimage to Estalia to take part in the *Spike! Magazine* Trophy Open. Puggy signs on with his old friends in the Reavers once more and, ever the professional, helps the squad to another famous victory and proves his worth to numerous potential employers.



DID YOU KNOW...

The Halfling team, the Stunted Stoutfellows, were once blessed with good fortune when their opponents, the Chaos All-Stars, failed to arrive for their match until half-time – by which time the plucky little guys were only 2-1 down!

DIRT FROM THE DUGOUT

Mindy Piewhistle is our Halfling on the spot when it comes to the dishy dirt and salacious scandals that our readers have come to know and love – this issue Mindy interviews her sister Cindy and gets the real story on what the Halfling Hopefuls get up to on tour!



MINDY: Cindy.

CINDY: Mindy.

MINDY: So, you play Blood Bowl now?

CINDY: Where better to sell my wares than a Blood Bowl stadium? You'd be surprised how popular Piewhistle's Preeminent Patisserie has proved since I popped onto the pitch!

MINDY: I bet the players are just lining up to get their hands on your pies!

CINDY: At least I know how to make a pie!

(At this point we took a brief break where we worked on some family issues – Mindy)

MINDY: And we're back... so I bet you've met lots of famous Halflings then?

CINDY: Well, last week I had the pleasure of sharing a dugout with none other than Puggy Baconbreath.

MINDY: Really? So what did you find out?

CINDY: Well, for a player well known for his rotund stature, everything under the uniform might not be as it seems...

MINDY: You don't mean what I think you mean?

CINDY: I certainly do.

MINDY: A prosthetic belly? Are you sure?

CINDY: I couldn't say.

(Note that at this point Cindy leaned over the table and gave me an exaggerated wink which indicated to me that she certainly could say! – Mindy)

MINDY: What else have you got for me?

CINDY: Well, I also heard from a certain horticulturalist that Deeproot – not his real name by the way – is not even a Treeman! In fact, at least half of the Treemen in the game are not really trees but are actually Halflings standing on each other's shoulders!

MINDY: Oh my goodness! Is this actually true? What else?

CINDY: I'm sure you've heard of Neddley Verrüca, the famous Halfling tree 'barber'. Well, I've heard that when Ned is not turning people into mincemeat on the pitch, he is running his own underground fight club!

MINDY: Did you say fat club?

CINDY: Fight club.

MINDY: Ok, now I know you're making all this up!

CINDY: You're not the only one that can make stuff up about people!

MINDY: Right! Well, I'm still going to print all of this and you can expla...

(At this point the Piewhistle sisters started fighting again and had to be escorted off of the premises – Ed)



FAMOUS FLORA:

DEEPROOT STRONGBRANCH



More than any other player, it is fair to say without fear of empty simile that Deeproot Strongbranch is a towering behemoth of the game. For many a long year, he has cast an imposing and often welcome shadow across the pitches and stadia of the Old World, even as his presence strikes terror into the opposition. We at *Spike! Journal* had planned to sit down with this legendary Treeman for an in-depth interview. Sadly, he was unable to make it into the office!

Treemen, so legend tells us, are kin to the Dryads of Athel Loren, but without the shapeshifting abilities and general malevolence that Dryads are known for. The Treemen of the Altern Forest in particular have a long and peaceful history, coexisting for centuries with their Halfling neighbours and rarely being seen by outsiders. The Treemen are seemingly content to keep watch over the un-warlike Halflings. In return, the Treemen enjoy the singular benefit of living alongside folk who, when faced with the need for chopped wood, would sooner pay merchants to bring it to them than be bothered to swing an axe themselves.

In the years since the resurgence of Blood Bowl, the Treemen of the Altern Forest have shaken off their bashfulness and come out of the arboreal gloom. They seem far more willing, even eager, to take to the pitch than others of their kind. This is just as well really, for without their might in the midfield, Halfling teams would surely not be the competitive powerhouses they undoubtedly are (wait... what? - Ed)!

Deeproot was famously the first of his kind to take to the gridiron. Way back in 2422, the news of the fate of the Pinkfoot Panthers rocked the Moot. Halflings far and wide were dumbstruck by the realisation that bad things could in fact happen to them! The Treemen of the Altern were

most upset. For centuries, they had protected their smaller neighbours from hostility from beyond their borders. Now they learned that Halflings were forming Blood Bowl teams and venturing beyond their safe boundaries, out into the world to actively look for hostility!

Deeproot, an elder of his community, took the lead. He emerged from the forest and trekked south for many days (covering about a mile, but Treemen aren't known for their speed - Ed) until he arrived at the home of the famous Greenfield Grasshuggers, his plan to present himself at the team's training grounds. No one was there of course, but he waited patiently as only a Treeman can. Late the following day, a few members of the squad arrived for training and Deeproot approached. The shock of seeing a tree detach itself from the landscape, stroll towards them and start talking caused the players to flee. So Deeproot waited some more. The following day, with news of events having spread far and wide, the entire team and all staff and hangers-on arrived early (ten o'clock in the morning!) to see what was going on. Once more, Deeproot presented himself. This time, however, a few of the Halflings, expecting something like this, didn't run away. Within the hour, the shouting and running around had ceased, Deeproot had signed for the Grasshuggers, and the rest, as they say, is history...

DEEPROOT STRONGBRANCH

TREEMAN
 300,000 GOLD PIECES



MA	ST	AG	AV
2	7	1	10

SKILLS:
 BLOCK, LONER, MIGHTY BLOW,
 STAND FIRM, STRONG ARM, THICK SKULL,
 THROW TEAM-MATE, TIMMM-BER!

TEAMS:
 HALFLING

SPIKE!
THE FANTASY FOOTBALL JOURNAL

DEEPROOT STRONGBRANCH

AGE: UNKNOWN
HEIGHT: 30 FT (APPROX) DEPENDING UPON THE SEASON
WEIGHT: 7 TONNES (ESTIMATED 4 TONNES DRY MASS)
ORIGINATING TEAM: GREENFIELD GRASSHUGGERS
POSITION: TURNING GENTLY TO FACE THE SUN

CAREER TOTALS: 23 BALLS IN PLAY LOST IN HIS BRANCHES; 893 PASSING TOUCHDOWNS ('PASSING' FRIENDLY PLAYERS THAT IS); 237 FATALITIES; 8 RUSHING YARDS; 439 YARDS GAINED BY LEANING GENTLY FORWARD WITH THE BALL

AWARDS: SPIKE! MAGAZINE STRONG ARM AWARD 2464, 2468, 2474, 2483, 2492, 2495; VINCE 'THE JUGGERNAUT' JOYNES TERRIBLE TACKLE AWARD 2472, 2485





DEEPROOT STRONGBRANCH CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2423 After many months of (*extremely intermittent!* – Ed) training, and learning how to move around the pitch without squashing his team-mates, Deeproot debuts for the Greenfield Grasshuggers. He is an instant hit with the fans, providing, as he does, both huge entertainment in the form of some very messy blocks and a ready supply of shade, protecting the crowded bleachers from the bright afternoon sun.

2425 Deeproot helps the Grasshuggers into the quarter final of the Thimble Cup, the Moot's premier tournament. The match proves tough though, as neither the Grasshuggers nor their opponents, the Stunted Stoutfellows, are very interested in scoring thanks to the presence of a record number of food stalls. Late in the second half, Deeproot and a fellow rookie team-mate pull off a stunning set-piece manoeuvre to break the deadlock, with Deeproot catapulting his Halfling team-mate deep into the opposition's half and within easy range of scoring.

2455 Deeproot heads a drive to aid Treemen wishing to break out of the woodland and play Blood Bowl. The annual Shove is promoted as welcoming Treemen and Halfling players alike, and things look positive for the sport. Positive, that is, until a poster campaign within the Altern Forest advertising the event to interested Treemen goes disastrously wrong. Relations between Halflings and Treemen become somewhat hostile until every last nail is removed and the Halflings responsible apologise to the injured Treemen!

2482 After years of campaigning by Deeproot and spurred on by the actions of the Asgard Ravens, the NAF reconsider their stance regarding the composition of Halfling teams, altering their regulations and allowing Halfling teams to include a maximum of two Treemen players. Many are disappointed by this, having grown accustomed to seeing Halfling squads brutally mauled. The NAF, however, has no choice, as the blockade of Treemen picketing the temple of Blood Bowl is causing havoc with the drains!

I want to say Halflings, but I'm going to say woodpeckers. Yes, I'm almost sure it's woodpeckers...

Deeproot, when asked by an ABC reporter what most annoys him

CHAT WITH THE RAT

Hackspit 'the Scribbler' Quillchewer is our ace Skaven reporter on the pitch, scrabbling about in strange places to bring us the remarkable stories from the sidelines. This issue, our brave rat met with Rud Melchior, holder of the Old World record for ferret-legging and a favourite half-time entertainer in the Moot to ask: What exactly is ferret-legging?

No, dear readers, you didn't read that wrong. We think he's been at the warpstone dust again...



QUILLCHEWER: So Rud-Rud, it's an honour to have you here today – we at *Spike!* Publications have been following your career closely (*no, we haven't!* – Ed)!

RUD: I'm delighted to be here, I do love meeting the fans, especially the rodent ones!

QUILLCHEWER: **uncontrollable giggling** Yes-yes! I was enthralled throughout your recent half-time world record attempt during the Thimble Cup Championship game. Five hours and 26 minutes!

RUD: Yes! It was quite the marathon. I must admit I was a bit disillusioned towards the end when the crowd started wandering off, I'd rather hoped to break the golden six-hour mark!

QUILLCHEWER: Ah, yes-yes! The 'four-minute mile' of ferret-legging! If anyone can do it Rud, you can!

RUD: Well, if those workmen hadn't turned up to dismantle the stage, I could have carried on even without crowd support! I mean, they said it was so that the teams could resume the match, but I happen to know that both teams were still drinking in the Portly Mallard! They had no intention of coming back for at least another hour! It was an outrage frankly and if I had my wa...

(At this point security had to step in and help Rud to calm down by sitting on him. One of our security guards lost the tip of a finger to an angered trouser-ferret during the struggle – Ed)

QUILLCHEWER: So, Rud, perhaps instead you'd like to tell us why ferret-legging is such a popular pastime in the Moot?

RUD: Well, the noble art of ferret-legging originates from the fine Halfling tradition of hunting on other people's land.

QUILLCHEWER: Poaching?

RUD: Yes, alright, "poaching". As you know, poaching is generally frowned upon, and owning hunting ferrets is outlawed in many places. So enterprising Halfling hunters have

had to learn how to secrete away a ferret about their person! Many a young Halfling, keen to honour these traditions, enjoys nothing more than stuffing their trousers with ferrets and seeing how long they can keep 'em down!

QUILLCHEWER: Fascinating, Rud-Rud! And it's fair to say that in recent years ferret-legging has enjoyed a surge in popularity thanks to the demand for exciting half-time entertainment?

RUD: Oh absolutely! What could be more enthralling for a Blood Bowl crowd whilst the teams enjoy a long lunch than seeing brave Halflings do battle in a contest of endurance?

QUILLCHEWER: Yes-yes! I myself love nothing more than watching such tense and tactical competition!

RUD: Yes! I must say Quillchewer, it's a rare privilege to meet such an enthusiastic trouserer!

(And it just goes on like that, for about six more pages. If you'd like to know more, Quillchewer has a book coming out later in the year; "The Thrill of Ferret-legging and other Trousers-related Pastimes." It's a self-published book. – Ed)



COOKING UP A SCORE

For many opponents, facing Halflings can be a delight – Halflings are many things, but ranked amongst the most deadly of foes they are not! They can, however, prove more than a handful – they are numerous, enthusiastic, distracting and generally rather annoying folk, and they bring all of these traits to the gridiron! Keen to learn the secrets of coaching the mighty folk of the Moot to victory, we at *Spike! Journal* caught up with everyone's favourite sports mortician, and no stranger to the glorious mantle of Stunty Cup winner, Paulus von Geggster, and plied him with crème cakes and sticky buns to reveal the tricks of the trade!

DID YOU KNOW...

Even the loyalty of a Halfling can be dented. The Marienburg Fishers, a NAF team between 2460-2470, lost 150 games out of 159 played, paid its players just 11 times in those 10 years, saw 94 players killed and 1,398 injured, but still kept coming back for more. That is, until just after the first touchdown in a game against the Champions of Death, when the players found out that there were no oranges in the dugout. They quit on the spot.

ULLO MY LUVERLIES!

Halflings are the slowest team in Blood Bowl – they need two mates to be able to take on even a lonely Hobgoblin and they could barely be more breakable. All teams have weaknesses, but Halfling teams take this to new levels.

A low-tier team thanks to their players' natural unsuitability to athletics, Halfling teams are often seen as reluctant to win and should consider a solitary touchdown a minor victory. In truth, the challenge of a team like Halflings, and the reason for their popularity, lies in their weaknesses; they will not win many games, but there are tactics available to get an extra something out of all teams and Halflings are no exception. There is huge enjoyment to be had in coaching the underdog to a glorious near-win! So let's consider how aspiring Halfling Head Coaches can improve their odds and keep their hairy-footed players on the pitch long enough to cook up a score. There are several main ingredients – and it's no different from all other Blood Bowl teams – numerical advantage, re-roll management and playing the clock.

NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE

Halflings are very breakable and not really fast enough to run away from danger – but they do have some rather important allies. A Halfling team has access to two Treemen, three if Deeproot Strongbranch is affordable with Inducement money. Treemen are the best bet for providing a proverbial wall between the opponent's homicidal frothing lunatics, intent on decapitating a

Halfling, and the chaps simply hoping that their heads would stay attached to their diminutive bodies.

Treemen are not fast, however. An offence should only move as quickly as a Treeman can lumber forward. A good Halfling Head Coach will send these behemoths downfield at a steady pace – getting into multiple opposition players' tackle zones. Being ST6 with Stand Firm means that the opposition are going to need to dodge away if they cannot commit to knocking Treemen down. Failed dodges and blocking anybody daft enough to stay in contact are key to winning any battle for numbers. Treemen only need one assist to hit an average opponent with three Block dice, so coaches should absolutely prioritise three-dice blocks, to increase chances of opponent damage and reduce chances of needing to use re-rolls on failed blocks – besides, if the Treeman can follow up, the assisting Halfling player can normally be safely behind a wall.

KEEPING IT TOGETHER

It's important for the team to play as a unit and not let any of the Treemen become isolated. They should be close enough to each other and their support to ensure that they cannot be mobbed and knocked down. A Treeman on the ground needs to return to the action immediately. This requires a 4+ roll, but Halflings in contact with a Treeman and not in tackle zones can help him stand up. Blood Bowl academics and biologists alike are still unsure how this works in practice, but their encouragement "*to stand between me and that Beastman before I start a campfire*" is evidently vital in getting Treemen back into formation!

If a downed Treeman is a bit of a problem, one left twisting in the wind still at the line of scrimmage whilst the play moves elsewhere is a complete disaster! Taking root cannot be allowed to happen too early in a half and an experienced Halfling coach will need to seek a

balance between getting Treemen into tackle zones with not activating them at all occasionally – especially when a team re-roll is not available for a Take Root roll. A rooted Treeman will absolutely delight an opponent as they immediately begin to plan how their tactics can bypass them altogether.

The same principles are in play for defence: maximising Treemen blocks, keeping Treemen upright/mobile and getting multiple opposing players in tackle zones. The Treemen have to spread out a little more, as otherwise the opposition will simply outflank them – and this can be achieved by using Halflings to fill holes in the defensive line.

All Halflings have the Dodge skill, and this is valuable against opposing rookie teams where blocking skills may be sparse. It means that Halflings have a good chance of staying upright when blocked – and essentially just get in the way of the professional Bloodbowlers that they are playing against.

Halfling Hopefuls are cheap, so a Halfling team can and must start games with a deep bench. If the Halflings can, start drives with 11 players – but by various means, start to whittle the opponent down, and tie up survivors in the tackle zones of Treemen then there's a chance that the rest of the team can start to seriously outnumber the remainder.

This brings us on to fouling. Halflings are just as good at it as those well-known cheaters, the Goblins – in fact better, as they are cheaper, so they can afford more goes! Halflings can and need to put the boot in repeatedly. There's a high chance of being sent off, but where the opponent is left wincing in the Dugout, the chance of victory has increased just a bit more. As with any fouling, it's important to target valuable opposition players first and get assists in to maximise the opportunity.



RE-ROLL MANAGEMENT

With the best will in the Old World, it's going to take some one-sided dice to win with Halflings solely through player attrition – this is where re-roll management comes in, or more precisely, baking! Food is never far from any self-respecting Halfling's thoughts – and this goes double for a Halfling team intent on playing Blood Bowl!

In a low Team Value game, a Halfling Master Chef is about as crucial an ingredient as there is. Opposing teams don't have much in the way of individual skills for blocking, dodging and ball-handling, and rely more on team re-rolls for getting out of trouble. It is imperative for the Chef's baking skills to distract the opposition at the beginning of each half, denying them a measure of reliability. This can be achieved by using money from the bank or, more usually with petty cash for

Inducements. Luckily, Halfling teams typically have a quite low Team Value, so petty cash is readily available. Resist the temptation to spend all of that gold – keep the Team Value sensibly low!

How aggressively a Halfling coach plays can be decided by how effective the Master Chef is, but a situation late in the half where the opposition is out of re-rolls and requiring dodging or ball-handling is playing into jam-covered hands.

PLAYING THE CLOCK

Halflings that manage to gain a numerical advantage don't want to see the opposition returning to the pitch, fresh from a rest, ready to equalise (and Halflings are not going to be winning any high scoring thrillers). A seasoned Halfling coach will aim to score in the final turn of a half, limiting the opportunities for the opposition, so there doesn't need to be a huge rush getting downfield immediately

from kick-off. Two squares a turn will see Treemen in the opposing End Zone, but this is rare against all but the most incompetent of opposition! However, even just one square per turn from regular movement or following up from blocks gets them just about in range for a Halfling to scurry out from behind the forest wall and make a dodge or two to score. This should assert the need to keep the Treemen upright and moving forwards, albeit slowly!

What is perhaps more likely on offence is needing to throw a Halfling a few squares to get them into range at the end of the half – so this should be plotted a couple of turns in advance to ensure that at least one Treeman can be unmarked or at least blitzed free by available players. This should be a standard Treeman rather than a Star Player, due to the need to access team re-rolls for a fumbled pass.

DID YOU KNOW...

That no Halfling team has ever won a Major championship in the entire history of the game? So why do they do it, you ask? For the post-match feast, of course!





DOING IT QUICKLY

Whilst discussing throwing team-mates, we should look at the fabled One-Turn Score. It's one of the highlights of Stunty play and often swings matches that otherwise seem lost, but it requires a significant amount of dice rolls and luck, so set-up needs to be right to maximise the chance of performing it successfully. Standard Treemen should be free from tackle zones and adjacent to potential scorers. Scoring partnerships on either edge of the line of scrimmage will provide different avenues based on where the kick might end up. Catchers could be incredibly useful here to help with getting the ball to them and they have a little more speed due to Sprint.

The rest of the Halflings need to be spread across the backfield, reducing the squares that would prevent an awkward kick blowing the chance. This allows for most squares in the front half of the receiving zone to be reached and be able to get the ball to a potential scorer without any

Go For Its (GFIs). It's also useful to have some players deep enough to still get the ball to a scorer with GFIs. The transition to the scorer has to be Hand-off as the thrown team-mate uses the turn's Pass Action.

Both Treemen and Catchers in the example could also take a step forward with a Quick Snap – and the Quick Snap is only taken after the kick has scattered, so the Halfling coach can see if moving these players forward is going to complicate the pick up and hand-off. Even without a Quick Snap, the Catchers could be set up on the line of scrimmage, allowing the Treemen to step into the other team's half to launch their pal. This reduces the risk of landing out of range, but adds to the difficulty of getting the ball to the scorer.

Once the potential scorer has the ball, the Pass can now be made downfield and due to the Strong Arm skill this will normally be on 2+. The limit of a thrown team-mate is only six squares and the lucky player

will then scatter three times, tricky as it is to throw an un-aerodynamic Halfling covered in chocolate sauce! On average, this will leave a normal Halfling just about at the range of scoring, so any additional movement skills could be very useful.

Landing is also tricky and normally requires a 4+, worse if an opposing coach has organised players to stand in a spaced out line in the likely landing area. Once landed and in range, only the dodging and celebrating is left to do!

Scoring plays is not the only use of thrown team-mates either. There's a reason why some Halflings wear colanders – it turns them into rather deadly missiles when launched by a dead-eye Treeman! Taking out the ball-carrier or the corner of a cage is a pretty handy thing to do!

STARTING A HALFLING TEAM

A new Halfling team should fully commit to having a Team Value deficit and hire a Master Chef every game. Thereafter it's two Treemen and enough players to at least have a couple of substitutes. A Halfling team should also start with at least two, perhaps three, re-rolls of its own.

2x Treemen (obviously)
 2x Halfling Catchers
 2x Halfling Hefties
 8x Halfling Hopefuls
 3x team re-rolls
Total: 860,000 gold pieces

Unusually that's all the team ever needs, as Inducements are more valuable than additional players, staff or an Apothecary (unless a true star has evolved that needs protection, and even that can be induced each game).

SKILLS

Halflings aren't known for their diversity with skills. The Treemen can only access Strength skills and the vast majority of Halflings can only access Agility skills.

POSITION	NORMAL	DOUBLE
Treeman	Grab, Break Tackle, Multiple Block	Block, Pro
Hopeful	Side Step then Diving Tackle	Block or Wrestle/Strip Ball combo
Fouler	-	Dirty Player
Catcher	Sure Feet, Side Step	Block
Hefty	Leader, Side Step	Block



TREEMEN

Grab is probably the best skill for a rookie Treeman – it ensures that the opposition can be manoeuvred into better positions, particularly back towards the Halflings lurking ready to gang-foul! Should the Treeman be rooted, it can remain in contact too. Multiple Block and Break Tackle are reasonable skills to make additional blocks with or to threaten dodging into cages. Guard is also useful, but Halflings don't have enough clout elsewhere to make good use of it!

Big Guys love the Block skill and the Treeman is no exception. So much so, it could be that Block is even better than an ST increase. Pro is great, allowing potential re-rolling of sub-optimal blocks, although Take Root rolls and Throw Team-mate for scores are important enough to use team re-rolls where available. MA increases are also great, although not necessarily better than Block on a double 5.

HALFLINGS

Side Step is a first skill for many Halflings, adding to general awkwardness and allowing ball-carriers to side-step back towards allies, in the event of being knocked down. Diving Tackle as a second skill can double the trouble, but standing next to opposition is not a recipe for longevity.

Sure Feet adds to the range of the player, especially for a Catcher – as they already have Sprint so now could potentially move eight squares with a following wind. With glacial Treemen in tandem, a fast player leaving the comfort of their leafy support is just sprinting towards their own demise, but when scoring is on the cards, reliable movement cannot be sniffed at.

Block, Wrestle and Strip Ball are useful double skills for Halflings. The team is going to need to foul, so a Dirty Player is also important, but should only be taken on a first Skill roll so that the player isn't adding to Team Value with skills that they won't really be using.

The best Skill roll is undoubtedly an Agility increase – great for ball-handling, One-Turn Score attempts and makes dodging a 2+ with an in-built Dodge re-roll! These players are so useful that their lights tend to be extinguished quickly by angry, threatened opponents. But whilst they play, they make the team even look vaguely competent!

A final note on development – as the team progresses, care needs to be taken to ensure that it can still afford a Master Chef, Deeproot and other choice Star Players. Hopefuls are cheap, but when skills get added or positionals are bought, the value for money worsens and this might start to impact on how many of those game-altering Inducements are affordable.

STARTING A HALFLING TEAM

A new Halfling team should fully commit to having a Team Value deficit and hire a Master Chef every game. Thereafter it's two Treemen and enough players to at least have a couple of substitutes. A Halfling team should also start with at least two, perhaps three, re-rolls of its own.

2x Treemen (obviously)

2x Halfling Catchers

2x Halfling Hefties

8x Halfling Hopefuls

3x team re-rolls

Total: 860,000 gold pieces

Unusually that's all the team ever needs, as Inducements are more valuable than additional players, staff or an Apothecary (unless a true star has evolved that needs protection, and even that can be induced each game).

SKILLS

Halflings aren't known for their diversity with skills. The Treemen can only access Strength skills and the vast majority of Halflings can only access Agility skills.

POSITION	NORMAL	DOUBLE
Treeman	Grab, Break Tackle, Multiple Block	Block, Pro
Hopeful	Side Step then Diving Tackle	Block or Wrestle/Strip Ball combo
Fouler	-	Dirty Player
Catcher	Sure Feet, Side Step	Block
Hefty	Leader, Side Step	Block



TREEMEN

Grab is probably the best skill for a rookie Treeman – it ensures that the opposition can be manoeuvred into better positions, particularly back towards the Halflings lurking ready to gang-foul! Should the Treeman be rooted, it can remain in contact too. Multiple Block and Break Tackle are reasonable skills to make additional blocks with or to threaten dodging into cages. Guard is also useful, but Halflings don't have enough clout elsewhere to make good use of it!

Big Guys love the Block skill and the Treeman is no exception. So much so, it could be that Block is even better than an ST increase. Pro is great, allowing potential re-rolling of sub-optimal blocks, although Take Root rolls and Throw Team-mate for scores are important enough to use team re-rolls where available. MA increases are also great, although not necessarily better than Block on a double 5.

HALFLINGS

Side Step is a first skill for many Halflings, adding to general awkwardness and allowing ball-carriers to side-step back towards allies, in the event of being knocked down. Diving Tackle as a second skill can double the trouble, but standing next to opposition is not a recipe for longevity.

Sure Feet adds to the range of the player, especially for a Catcher – as they already have Sprint so now could potentially move eight squares with a following wind. With glacial Treemen in tandem, a fast player leaving the comfort of their leafy support is just sprinting towards their own demise, but when scoring is on the cards, reliable movement cannot be sniffed at.

Block, Wrestle and Strip Ball are useful double skills for Halflings. The team is going to need to foul, so a Dirty Player is also important, but should only be taken on a first Skill roll so that the player isn't adding to Team Value with skills that they won't really be using.

The best Skill roll is undoubtedly an Agility increase – great for ball-handling, One-Turn Score attempts and makes dodging a 2+ with an in-built Dodge re-roll! These players are so useful that their lights tend to be extinguished quickly by angry, threatened opponents. But whilst they play, they make the team even look vaguely competent!

A final note on development – as the team progresses, care needs to be taken to ensure that it can still afford a Master Chef, Deeproot and other choice Star Players. Hopefuls are cheap, but when skills get added or positionals are bought, the value for money worsens and this might start to impact on how many of those game-altering Inducements are affordable.

TOURNAMENTS & EXHIBITION MATCHES

A common Team Value used at Tournaments is 1,100,000 gold pieces. This will allow a Master Chef, two team re-rolls, 2 Treemen, Deeproot and 11 Hopefuls. With skills in advance, a smattering of Side Step and Block is sensible.

With more money, Catchers and Hefties can be considered – or additional Stars that can get that ball bouncing around on the floor – so Cindy Piewhistle and her collection of lemon tarts or gardening expert, Neddley Verrüca. Karla von Kill and her own brand of trouble has regularly been seen across the Moot too.

OFFENSIVE LINE

A standard drive will need to start, after sensible moves that require no dice rolling, with three dice blocks from Treemen. They should be thinking about following up to start the creep towards the opposition End Zone whilst keeping opponents in tackle zones. The remaining players need to spread out to recover the ball and prevent too disastrous an outcome of an opponent Blitz!



DEFENSIVE LINE

The set-up shown here will likely mean that only one Halfling is hit – unless the opposition want to stay next to the Treemen! If Deeproot is also playing, then the Treemen can be spread out along the line over five squares, meaning they cannot be taken down easily and put tackle zones on all squares on the line of scrimmage.



SUMMARY

Halflings themselves are slow, injury-prone and mostly incompetent. Their allies are even slower and often end up standing around, far from the action. But what they lack in ability, they make up for in numbers, awkwardness and cooking. If the Treemen can be persuaded to stay interested for long enough, and perhaps the opposing ball-carrier can be taken down (or out), then they can even pull off the upset.

They are a big challenge for even the best coaches – and there will be more defeats than wins, but win or lose, the after-dinner parties are a thing to savour. Bring on the fun, bring on the crème brûlée!

KEY

-  Ball Carrier
-  Halfling Catcher
-  Halfling Hefty
-  Halfling Hopeful
-  Treeman



CAPTAIN COLANDER

THE CAPE CONDIMENT

As regular readers know, legendary commentator Bob Bifford is writing his much-anticipated memoirs, chock full of tales from his time as a player! This mighty tome of sports trivia, vague dates and rough details is to be brought to readers in conjunction with *Spike!* Publications. Highlights can be found serialised in this very Journal (we're good to you! – Ed)! One tale that the Biff is especially fond of telling is of his time playing for the Pie X-press (the Team, not the rapid delivery bakery of the same name – Ed), in particular, the legend of Captain Colander, a truly irrepressible Halfling!



CAPTAIN COLANDER

HALFLING
100,000 GOLD PIECES



MA	ST	AG	AV
6	2	3	7

SKILLS:
CATCH, DISTURBING PRESENCE, DODGE, FEND, JUMP UP, LONER, REGENERATION, RIGHT STUFF, SIDE STEP, STUNTY

TEAMS:
HALFLING

CAPTAIN COLANDER

SPIKE!
THE FANTASY FOOTBALL JOURNAL

AGE: UNKNOWN
HEIGHT: 3 FT 6 INCHES (BEFORE 'THE INCIDENT')
WEIGHT: 93 LBS
ORIGINATING TEAM: PIE X-PRESS
POSITION: WIDE RECEIVER

CAREER TOTALS: RUSHING 372 YARDS; 8 TOUCHDOWNS; 13 CITATIONS FOR MAKING RUDE GESTURES TOWARDS OFFICIALS

AWARDS: LEO SWERES FINE DINING AWARD 2462; SPIKE! MAGAZINE CHEEKIEST INNUENDO AWARD 2462

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Spike! Journal
PLAYER RATING

Many years ago, young Bob Bifford signed for a season with an amateur squad of Halfling hopefuls; the Pie X-press. This was long before the NAF changed the rules regarding Treeman players on Halfling teams, and it was not uncommon to see mercenary Ogres playing alongside Halflings. Over the course of a season, the presence of the Biff provided some much needed strength! Quite how the team was able to afford his already extortionate fees as a mercenary, no one is sure (*he got really fat on all the pies* – Ed).

The Pie X-press quickly became a firm favourite with fans, and several stand out players have been inducted into the Moot's own hall of fame. These include 'Razor' Burns, Cathay and Triple-berry Crunch. Young, crude and ever-shocking and controversial in their antics, the Pie X-press earned contempt and disdain from pundits and commentators in equal measure, but with the average Halfling in the street they were a big success. Even today, Pie X-press memorabilia is commonly sported by Halfling fans on match day, regardless of the teams playing.

Sadly, the team's dreams of glory were short-lived. Many dreams died horribly within a few matches, along with the players harbouring them! The Pie X-press is remembered mostly today for its quite shocking rate of attrition.

Many a young Halfling learnt the hard way that posing and making rude gestures to the crowd wasn't the only thing required to be a tough guy!

As Bob tells the tale, it quickly reached the point where he didn't recognise any of his team-mates; in every match the whole starting line-up had changed!

... The whole line-up, apart from one young Halfling, that is.

Captain Colander (*obviously not his real name* – Ed), was at first quite an unassuming young chap, less given to displays of bravado than his more short-lived, extreme sports-playing team-mates, but nonetheless a brave and competent player. After a few fixtures he was the only founding member of the squad remaining. After a few more fixtures, he was proving

quite the long-lived veteran, and with this longevity came a rude, crude and highly outspoken new demeanour!

Captain Colander gradually became more brash and outspoken as his luck and legend continued to grow around him. In a match against the Crimson Spikes, he momentarily vanished beneath the churning hooves of a Beastman stampede on the end zone, only to reappear, gesturing rudely to the Chosen team's fans. Facing the infamous and notorious Gouged Eye, he went toe to toe with his opposite number Varag Ghoul-Chewer, both players grappling viciously until officials were forced to step in and pry Colander from Varag's white-knuckled grip before the massive Orc did himself a mischief! Against the Dwarf Giants, Captain Colander survived a run-in with a Deathroller that left him coated in oil, in need of a replacement helmet and, some say, taller but strangely less three-dimensional.

Over the season, Colander's legend grew and grew. He was indomitable, indestructible, and actually quite a fair player! In time he took to wearing a cape, taunting opposition players with his outrageous appearance and scant regard for the hazard it posed. In his memoirs, Bob Bifford writes that this brave young Halfling was "*...the boldest and most courageous character, ever in the thick of the action and always quick to goad the opposition beyond blind rage!*"

Sadly, the Captain only played one season. Some say he retired to live a life of luxury at home in the Moot. Others that he fell foul of the Darkside Cowboys, a team notorious for getting even. Whatever the case, the legend of the indestructible Captain Colander lives on in the hearts of all Halfling Blood Bowl fans!

For the dozens in attendance and the score watching at home... Let's get ready to cook it!

Captain Colander's infamous greeting to the crowd before every match

GOLDEN ERA STAR PLAYERS

This category of Star Players represents historical characters long since retired from the game. With such famous figures there is a risk that their skills and abilities may be a bit over the top, exaggerated through the retelling of their fantastic prowess as players.

League Commissioners and event organisers should specify which, if any, Golden Era Star Players may be included in their league or event separately to any guidelines on the use of normal Star Players.

Coaches preparing for an Exhibition Match should decide between themselves which, if any, Golden Era Star Players will be included, and it must be said that, in time, such legendary characters will present coaches with the opportunity to try out some incredible "What if..." scenarios.

SMALL-TIME CELEBRITIES

LESSER KNOWN HALFLING STAR PLAYERS

Politics in the Moot is a funny affair. Halflings aren't ruled over by royalty or emperors like proper nations. Instead, each town and village is governed by a council made up of interested citizens (*most just turn up expecting a free lunch – Ed*). Each such council gathers to discuss important matters and decisions are made by common agreement.

Why do we mention this? You may well ask. This oddity of the Halfling socio-political process seems deeply ingrained and can be seen in everything they do, including managing a Blood Bowl team. Teams are run by extended councils of (often related) coaches and experts. Halfling teams travel with huge entourages of hangers-on and helpers, from chefs tending the Halflings to gardeners tending the Treemen. A major downside of this, as far as match officials are concerned, is that Halflings will let anyone who fancies joining in, join in, and it's sometimes hard to tell who should be on the pitch and who should be on the sidelines!

"So I says, 'I'm a farmer...
Of course I'm out-standing in my field!'"

*Rumbelow Sheepskin, not being interviewed for
Spike! Journal but talking to us anyway*

"Going anywhere nice at the weekend,
sir? Just got a nice line of new
bird feed in!"

Neddley Verrüca, chatting with his clientele

"Them players on that other team, they was
rude and uncouth, shoving our poor boys
around, the ruffians! I was only defending
our players!"

*Cindy Piewhistle, explaining exactly what she thought she was
doing when she started throwing pies around the pitch*

"I'll have the stuffed badger, poached
guinea fowl, the oysters and hedgehog
liver with wild truffle and blue cheese
salad, and a bucket of Popped Khorne."

Big Jobo Hairyfoot, ordering a snack at the bar



NEDDLEY VERRÜCA, STYLIST TO THE STARS

It is debatable if Halfling society was actually aware of the large community of Treemen living on their doorstep until Deeproot Strongbranch famously presented himself at the Grasshuggers ground and gave several players quite a scare! Halflings don't pay much attention to anything not of immediate interest. In recent years, several entrepreneurial Halflings have discovered a good trade, turning their gardening skills towards Treeman styling and beauty treatments. Neddley Verrüca is one such successful fellow. His talent with rake and shears, combined with innovative use of stilts, has made him the stylist of choice for many celebrity Treeman Blood Bowl players and his skill is always in high demand. He has even been known to take to the pitch, tending to his clients mid-match and sometimes making more devious use of his shears!

SPIKE! EXCLUSIVE STAR PLAYER PROFILE:

AGE: 47 **HEIGHT:** 3 ft 8 inches (without his trademark stilts)

WEIGHT: 89 lbs **ORIGINATING TEAM:** Shiretown Stuffers

POSITION: Celebrity Stylist **CAREER TOTALS:** 23 rushing yards; 7 serious injuries (only one self inflicted, running on stilts with shears incident); 14 on-pitch emergency topiary treatments

AWARDS: Innovation Award 2494; Monty Juan Award For Terrific Topiary 2488, 2491, 2493

SPIKE! MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER RATING: 48

NEDDLEY VERRÜCA

HALFLING
70,000 GOLD PIECES

MA	ST	AG	AV
5	2	3	6

SKILLS:
DODGE, LONER, SECRET WEAPON, STAB, STUNTY, TRADEMARK STILTS (GRANTS LEAP & VERY LONG LEGS)

TEAMS:
HALFLING

CINDY PIEWHISTLE

Madame Cindy Piewhistle is the glamorous face behind Piewhistle's Preeminent Patisserie, located at the intersection of Fighting Cockerel Lane and Short Street in downtown Dreiflusen. This finest of Halfling bakeries is held in the highest regard by lovers of a well-stuffed pastry the world over, and is renowned for the quality of its crusts and the stickiness of its buns. A firm follower of Blood Bowl and the proud sponsor of the Bluebay Crammers, Cindy (sister of our own Mindy, you know – Ed) has herself on more than one occasion taken to the pitch during a lull in the action to cater to the players' culinary needs, often sharing a particularly hot offering with the opposition! That's Piewhistle's Preeminent Patisserie readers, for all your pastry needs!

SPIKE! EXCLUSIVE STAR PLAYER PROFILE:

AGE: 63 **HEIGHT:** 3 ft 6 inches **WEIGHT:** 86 lbs

ORIGINATING TEAM: Bluebay Crammers **POSITION:** Master Baker **CAREER TOTALS:** 134 mid-match savoury treat interventions; 246 passing yards; 37 citations for throwing hot pies at players and officials

AWARDS: Great Moot Bake Off Champion 2480, 2484, 2490 (later stripped), 2496; Spike! Magazine Cheekiest innuendo Award 2482, 2488, 2494

SPIKE! MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER RATING: 34

CINDY PIEWHISTLE

HALFLING
50,000 GOLD PIECES

MA	ST	AG	AV
5	2	3	6

SKILLS:
ACCURATE, BOMBARDIER, DODGE, LONER, SECRET WEAPON, STUNTY

TEAMS:
HALFLING

RUMBELOW SHEEPSKIN

Owner of the largest sheep farm in the Moot, Rumbelow was approached several seasons ago about renting some land to the Tithebarn Toffee Apples, a new squad eager to break into the Stunty leagues. With the promise of cash up front, he agreed. On the day of the Toffee Apples' first fixture, Rumbelow rode up to enjoy the spectacle. The old farmer had quickly become a firm fan of his resident team, and when the tide of the game turned against them, he took matters into his own hands. Bursting onto the pitch mounted upon his trusty ram, Lambshanks, Rumbelow charged into the opposing Barleywine line of scrimmage. Halfling players were butted left and right by the charging tup, whilst others fled the pitch to safety and refused to return! Rumbelow's position within the team was thus secured.

SPIKE! EXCLUSIVE STAR PLAYER PROFILE:

AGE: 95 **HEIGHT:** 3 ft 10 inches **WEIGHT:** 99 lbs

ORIGINATING TEAM: Tithebarn Toffee Apples

POSITION: Mounted Defence

CAREER TOTALS: 17 defensive blitzes; 8 sacks; 11 serious injuries; 14 match officials unceremoniously thrown off his land

AWARDS: Sheep Farmer of the Year 2487, 2493; Most Elegant Ewe 2484, 2485

SPIKE! MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER RATING: 118



BIG JOBO HAIRYFOOT

Big Jobo Hairyfoot is a Halfling who likes his food. They all do, but Big Jobo's infatuation with food is noteworthy. Ever-keen to try out new delicacies in foreign lands, his love of experimental cuisine saw him sign up with the Moot Mighties, hoping to travel the world and sample all the food within it in their company. He has survived several seasons of campaigning with the Mighties, largely because he hasn't played in many matches – reportedly having missed more than one hundred fixtures due to indigestion or food poisoning! To the Mighties, this is a noble achievement and he is considered an exemplar of Halfling sporting prowess. Unfortunately, for those teams he has played against, Big Jobo's impressive girth and constant gastric difficulties combine to make him a terror in the midfield and quite prone to playing dirty!

SPIKE! EXCLUSIVE STAR PLAYER PROFILE:

AGE: 63 **HEIGHT:** 4 ft 1 inch **WEIGHT:** 121 lbs

ORIGINATING TEAM: Moot Mighties **POSITION:** Defensive

Lineman **CAREER TOTALS:** 6 start in 117 matches; 6 half-time substitutions in 6 starts; 4 defensive blitzes; 2 serious injuries

AWARDS: McMurty's Spamburgers Footballer of the Year 2494, 2495; Dirty Dan's Foul Play Award 2495

SPIKE! MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER RATING: 83



THE MINOR LEAGUES

BLOOD BOWL LEAGUES FOR SHORTER PLAYERS

Since the collapse of the NAF nearly a decade ago, opportunities have opened up in a great many tournaments and privately organised competitions for teams that in the old days never really stood much of a chance in the big leagues. Sure, there were always 'Stunty' teams that featured in the various conferences and sub-divisions of the NAF, but they rarely lasted long against more established teams and bigger players (they died – Ed). But being as fanatical about Nuffle's great game as anyone else, these diminutive stars of the astrogranite founded their own competitions!

In the old days, Stunty teams focused their efforts towards their own, exclusive, leagues and tournaments, free from the interference of the NAF and other, bigger races who, they felt, took the whole business far too seriously. There were a great many of these, from the Little Big Tour to the Fighting Cockerel Classic. Such tournaments sprung up throughout the Old World and beyond in response to the harsh treatment and terrible losses Stunty teams suffered in NAF competition.

From the Badlands, home to innumerable Goblin tribes, to the Mountains of Mourn, where the majority of Gnoblars teams (*complete with their trained Ogres – Ed*) hail from, no end of Stunty tournaments and leagues sprung up. It was, however, always the Halfling Moot that played host to the highest number of Stunty events. This relatively small province became home to more Stunty leagues and tournaments than anywhere else in all the known world, and in recent years the number of competitions hosted there has only increased!

Many Stunty competitions of the NAF era thrive to this day, arguably the most famous and popular of which is the annual Thimble Cup. This event has run for more than 70 years, and each year attracts ever more teams, all hoping to compete in a festival of Blood Bowl that runs for six weeks every summer. This is probably four weeks too long, but as it runs to Halfling time, the extra weeks are needed to allow for late kick-offs, long lunches and stopping when the pub opens.

The Thimble Cup tournament is held in and around Dreiflusen, the largest town of the Halfling Moot, in a series of temporary stadia. The name 'stadium' is rather grand for a makeshift pitch marked out with whitewash in a farmer's field only recently vacated of sheep and surrounded by rickety bleachers. But, to the Halflings of the Moot, these temporary temples to Nuffle rise from the countryside like towering monuments to their beloved sport. For the duration of this glorious six-week period, the rural idyll of Dreiflusen becomes a bustling metropolis. Numerous eateries and bars spring up in marquees, tented towns cover the rolling vales, and fairground attractions dot the countryside.

For Halfling, Goblin, Snotling and Gnoblars (*the true power behind Ogre teams – Ed*) players alike, the Thimble Cup is the pinnacle of the sporting year. Long may it continue!



DID YOU KNOW...?

In 2485, a team called the *Glimdwallow Geezers* appeared on the Blood Bowl scene, to the instant delight of Halfling fans everywhere. The Geezers were, to a player, ancient and stooped, charmingly irascible and possessed of the most lustrous white beards (not to mention their eccentric pointy hats). Taking the Geezers for truly ancient Halflings, opposing teams went easy on them in an uncharacteristic but highly touching display of respect for their elders. It was only when the Glimdwallow Geezers won the South Shire Stunty Invitational without taking a single casualty that an official investigation revealed the entire team not to be ancient Halflings, but Gnomes, resulting in all 16 players getting a thorough, and long overdue, kicking from their vengeful fans.

THE THIMBLE CUP LEAGUE TOURNAMENT

The Thimble Cup is a variation on a normal Blood Bowl league season, as described in the *Inaugural Blood Bowl Almanac*. How the league itself is organised; number of teams, how many divisions there are, how many rounds are played and so forth, should all be decided upon by the League Commissioner based upon how many coaches take part and what is best for everyone participating. It differs from a normal season however in a few key aspects:

STUNTY CUP

The only teams that may take part in the Thimble Cup are Halflings, Goblins and Ogres (or any future team which is categorised as a 'Stunty' team). League Commissioners may choose to open this up to include Underworld Denizens teams that contain no Skaven Linemen, Throwers or Blitzers and Lizardmen teams that contain no Saurus or Kroxigor.

SPECIAL PLAY CARDS

Stunty Tournaments are a truly chaotic affair and the use of Special Play cards is to be encouraged. However, in order to maintain a degree of sanity, it is recommended that Variant 1: the Points System (see page 102 of the *Inaugural Blood Bowl Almanac*) be used.

INDUCEMENTS

All Inducements should be allowed in the Thimble Cup. Indeed, they should be encouraged!

ROUGH AND READY STADIUMS

All matches during the Thimble Cup are played either in a Rough and Ready Stadium (see page 69 of the *Inaugural Blood Bowl Almanac*) or using the rules that accompany a suitable pitch, such as the Goblin or Halfling pitch, at the discretion of the League Commissioner. A D6 is rolled prior to each match to determine the attribute of the stadium in use. However, teams may not become resident or attempt to take ownership of a stadium during the Thimble Cup (they'll be gone once it's over!).



LONG LUNCHES AND EARLY DINNERS

Stunty teams in general, and Halflings squads in particular, are notorious for their terrible timekeeping. Matches rarely start on time, drives are interrupted and, in the worst cases, players wander off mid-game for a quiet drink and a sandwich!

To represent this, the following Kick-off table is used throughout the Thimble Cup:

2D6 EVENT

- 2-3** **"Was that the whistle?":** If the kicking team's Turn marker is on turn 6, 7 or 8 for the half, both coaches move their Turn marker back one space. Otherwise, both coaches move their Turn marker forward one space.
- 4** **Solid Defence:** The coach of the kicking team may choose D6 of their players that are not in an opposition player's tackle zone. These players may be removed and set up again, following all of the usual set-up rules.
- 5** **Bad Kick:** The ball scatters a number of squares equal to the roll of 2D6 on the kick-off, instead of the usual D6.
- 6** **Enthusiastic Fans:** Both coaches roll a D3 and add their FAME and the number of Cheerleaders on their roster to the result, re-rolling ties. The winner gains one extra team re-roll for this half.
- 7** **Changing Weather:** Make a roll on the Weather table and apply that result. If the weather conditions are Nice as a result of this roll, the ball will scatter one extra square in a random direction before landing.
- 8** **Inspired Coaching:** Both coaches roll a D3 and add their FAME and the number of Assistant Coaches on their roster to the result, re-rolling ties. The winner gains one extra team re-roll for this half.
- 9** **"Don't You Argue With Me!":** Both coaches roll a D6 and add their FAME to the result, re-rolling ties. One randomly determined player with the Stunty skill on the team that rolls the lowest is immediately sent to the Reserves box by an angry referee and must miss this drive.
- 10** **Burst of Activity:** D6 players on the kicking team that are not in an opposition player's tackle zone may move up to their MA. One may perform a Blitz action.
- 11** **"Are You Even On The Team?":** Both teams may set up one Journeyman player (as described on page 56 of the *Inaugural Blood Bowl Almanac*), regardless of how many players are on the pitch already. This player cannot be placed in a wide zone or on the line of scrimmage. At the end of the drive, this player is ejected by the referee.
- 12** **"It's Happy Hour!":** D3 randomly-determined players with the Stunty skill on each team are removed from the pitch and placed in the Reserves box.

MANY GLORIOUS PRIZES!

'Glorious' might be stretching it, but the winners are rewarded quite nicely. The team that wins the Thimble Cup league season is rewarded as follows:

GLITTERING PRIZES: As usual, the teams that finish 1st, 2nd and 3rd receive cash prizes as described on page 58 of the *Inaugural Blood Bowl Almanac*.

FAN FOLLOWING: In addition to the cash prizes on offer, the team that wins the Thimble Cup will become even more popular, attracting more fans and hangers-on, whether they want them or not! The team that wins the Thimble Cup immediately gains the following:

- +D3 Fan Factor (to a maximum of 18)
- +D3 Assistant Coaches
- +D3 Cheerleaders



ON AND OFF AGAIN; HALF-TIME WITH THE HALFLINGS

Whenever a Halfling team turns up at a stadium ahead of a match, be it a simple field in the Moot overlooked by rickety bleachers, or the mighty Emperor Luitpold I Memorial stadium in Altdorf (now come on, no Halfling team has ever played there – Ed), they move in wholesale and take over the place! Halflings treat the game of Blood Bowl as an excuse to work up an appetite ahead of their next meal. Even the vast majority of players seem less interested in the outcome of the game than the concession stands present.

Team cooks will take over any available kitchens, whilst various hangers-on flood into catering areas, bars and hospitality suites, making themselves right at home. Numerous essential members of team staff will accost the locals, chattering tirelessly about the most personal of subjects for no other reason than to be friendly! One wonders why anyone would put up with Halflings at all!





Annoying and bewildering as they may be, Halfling teams and their endless array of staff, hangers-on and vaguely interested distant relatives enjoying a nice day out certainly do turn a simple game of Blood Bowl into a spectacle to remember. Fans of all races seem more than happy to suffer interminable delays to the kick-off whilst the food, drink and merry conversation flows. And flow it certainly does! With kitchens overrun by busy Halflings and bars crowded with friendly Moot-folk, match day becomes a buzz of jolly activity. The smells and aromas coming from the various catering facilities sets mouths watering, drawing ever more spectators to the stadium. This is why stadium owners and match promoters encourage Halfling teams!

This relentlessly upbeat atmosphere can be particularly wearying for the opposition however, as Halfling teams are notorious for not being quite so daft as they look. Even as opposition fans are fed and welcomed as old friends, the rival team itself is ignored, forced to look on hungrily as the feasting and drinking continues around them. Being slowly and torturously driven to distraction by the incredible aromas of fabulous food, watching their fans and match officials drink merrily as the allotted kick-off time disappears into the distant past can wear down the strongest of teams. When play does commence, the other side will be tired, hungry and angry. They will make mistakes and the Halflings will benefit.

Facing a Halfling team can be a real test for many teams. It only gets worse when the little swines swagger drunkenly onto the pitch looking for a fight, or start bombarding the centrefield with cauldrons of scalding soup from the sidelines!

NEW INDUCEMENTS



Any team may Induce a Halfling Master Chef for a match, as detailed below.

Halfling and Ogre teams may Induce the Halfling Hot Pot for a match, as detailed on [page 34](#).

Halfling and Ogre teams may Induce 0-3 Heady Brews for a match, as detailed on [page 34](#).

It is important to note that the use of Inducements varies between leagues and Tournaments, and coaches should read the rules pack or ask the League Commissioner/Tournament organisers if they are unsure. Where an Inducement is listed as being cheaper for a specific team, that team always pays the lower cost regardless of whether the match is part of a league, at a Tournament or an Exhibition Match.

0-1 HALFLING MASTER CHEF

(300,000 GOLD PIECES)

AVAILABLE TO ANY TEAM.

HALFLING TEAMS MAY HIRE A HALFLING MASTER CHEF FOR 100,000 GOLD PIECES.

Halfling cuisine is renowned the world over, with the Moot having become home to many famous chefs. This love of food is never more evident than when Halfling teams turn up on match day. Their entourage will always include several world class chefs who busy themselves with preparing the half-time and full-time banquets alongside the many snacks the players require mid-drive. The delicious aromas emanating from a Halfling dugout all too often distract the opposition as much as they invigorate the Halflings!

A Halfling Master Chef should be represented in games with a suitable model on the sidelines. This both looks good and acts as a reminder that the Chef is present, inspiring their team and disheartening the opposition!

At the start of each half, after both teams have been set up but before the kick-off, roll three D6. For each dice that rolls a 4 or more, the team is so inspired that they gain an extra team re-roll for this half. In addition, the opposing team is so distracted, that for each dice that rolls a 4 or more, they will lose one of their team re-rolls for this half.

DID YOU KNOW...

That in the year 2461, a player for the Halfling team the Bluebay Crammers scored a touchdown without his feet ever leaving his own starting zone? Lefty (later known as Stumpy) Boggit was hit by a Minotaur from the opposing Doom Lords team, and flew all the way to the other end of the field – leaving a pair of small, hairy feet behind him!

0-1 HALFLING HOT-POT

(60,000 GOLD PIECES)

AVAILABLE TO HALFLING AND OGRE TEAMS

Once a desperate measure, the Halfling Hot Pot is something of a mainstay among Moot militias. The Hot Pot is exactly that, a cauldron of boiling soup or stew, catapulted from a primitive wooden frame towards a foe. The contents can cause significant inconvenience, but for anyone unfortunate enough to be hit by the cauldron itself, the effects can be quite terminal!

A Hot Pot should be represented in games with a suitable model on the sidelines, both for the look of the thing and to act as a reminder that it is there. A Hot Pot can be used once per match, launching a cauldron of piping hot stew onto the opposition.

The Hot Pot may be used at the start of any of your turns, before any player performs an Action. Choose a target square anywhere on the pitch and roll a D6. On a 6, the shot is on target. On a 2-5, the shot is off target – roll for scatter and move the target square D3 squares in that direction. On a 1, however, something has gone horribly wrong and the Hot Pot has misfired in the team's Dugout – D3 randomly determined players in the Reserves box are immediately KO'd and moved to the Knocked Out box.

A player in the target square is automatically hit by the Hot Pot itself and Knocked down. Make an Armour roll (and possible Injury roll as well) as if they had been Knocked Down by a player with the Mighty Blow skill. Additionally, roll a D6 for each standing player (from either team) that is in a square adjacent to the target square. On a 4 or higher, the player has been hit by the stew that showers out of the Hot Pot and is Placed Prone. On a 3 or lower, the player manages to duck and avoid being hit. If a player on your team is Placed Prone by the shower of hot stew, then your team does not suffer a Turnover unless the player was carrying the ball at the time. If a player on your team is Knocked Down by the Hot Pot itself, a Turnover is caused.

0-3 BOTTLES OF HEADY BREW

(40,000 GOLD PIECES)

AVAILABLE TO HALFLING AND OGRE TEAMS

Halfling enjoy a fine ale every bit as much as they enjoy fine food. Many Halfling ales are particularly potent and prone to making these diminutive folk uncharacteristically fighty and troublesome! It is not uncommon for Stunty Blood Bowl players to be dosed with a bottle before kick-off by a wily coach. The effect this has on them can be pretty extreme!

At the start of a drive, after setting up but before the kick-off, the coach of the team with this Inducement may randomly select D3 players with the Stunty skill currently on the pitch. For the remainder of the drive, those players gain the Dauntless, Frenzy and Really Stupid skills.

MIGHTY BLOW!

'LIFE OF PIES!'

MORE TALL TALES OF SPORTING GLORY FROM THE CAREER OF ALL-TIME STAR PLAYER BOB BIFFORD

Well readers, that almost wraps it up for this big fat issue of *Spike! Journal*, aside from the post-match feast, which we all know is going to last so long that it'll eventually blur into breakfast.

But wait! There's time for one last tasty treat in the form of this issue's exciting Mighty Blow! Brought to us once again by none other than Blood Bowl legends-in-their-own-lifetimes 'Portly' Pete Knifton and 'Famishing' Nick Kyme, in this issue, Bob learns not to underestimate the Halflings – the hard way...



BOB: "DID I EVER TELL
YOU ABOUT THE FIRST
TIME I PLAYED A TEAM OF
HALFLINGS?"

HA, HA, HA, HA!



SERIOUSLY? THOSE LITTLE
HEDGE RUTTERS?

YES, SERIOUSLY. THEY'RE
CALLED THE GREENFIELD
GRASSHUGGERS...

HA, HA, HA, HA!



OKAY, I'LL DO IT...

HOW MUCH AGAIN?

"I THOUGHT IT WAS EASY MONEY. I WAS
THE GREAT BOB BIFFORD. I COULD TAKE ON
THESE PIP-SQUEAKS ON MY OWN, RIGHT?"

THE NEXT DAY...

CHOMP!

THWACK!

GET OFF ME, YOU LITTLE RUNTS!

SQUEEILCH!

AIE!!!

GNAW!

KNIFTON!



"IT WAS LIKE PLAYING AGAINST A SWARM OF BEES..."



EEK! EASY NOW, BOYS. EASY NOW...

RIIP!

BITE!

KHORNETTO

GLUTTEN FREE!

EEK! EASY NOW, BOYS. EASY NOW...

RIIP!

BITE!

KHORNETTO

GLUTTEN FREE!

GAH! GET THE LITTLE WEASELS OFF ME!
NUFFLE'S NARDS, THEY STINK!

AND SOME ONE CALL MY AGENT. RIGHT CHUFFING NOW!

GAH! GET THE LITTLE WEASELS OFF ME!
NUFFLE'S NARDS, THEY STINK!

RAN HAGGIS

ORC
AYE!

DEATH
WHISK

HORACE

R

AND SOME ONE CALL MY AGENT. RIGHT CHUFFING NOW!

OOOF! GET OFF ME, YOU SMELLY LITTLE LUMP!

BITE ME, YOU PASTY GIT!

OOOF! GET OFF ME, YOU SMELLY LITTLE LUMP!

BITE ME, YOU PASTY GIT!

IF YOU INSIST...

THE END