

BLACK ΩMEGA SQUADRON B5CCG UK NEWSLETTER

Black Omega Online
<http://www.prism-comp-tr.demon.co.uk/b5/webpage.html>

The Rangers

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T2K - Judgement Day for Team B5?

Triples team competition guns for the world record...

B5 returns to Sheffield in April for the B5CCG UK Team Championships at Triples 2000. Last year's event was hailed a rousing success by all involved and this year, rivalries that have festered since the tense final round are likely to explode as teams lock horns for the coveted title.

However, there is more at stake this year as Black Omega has thrown up an open invitation to teams from the rest of the world to come to Sheffield and join in the fun. After the World Championships rumors abounded that a team from Belgium and a team including four of the World finalists from Germany would be making the trip. Black Omega are hoping that this increased interest will help this event break the record for the largest B5 tournament in the world - currently standing at 52 players at GenCon99 in the USA.

At the time of writing there are seven teams in the pot including two from last years second place battlers, Newcastle, and a massive three teams from the Welsh champions.

The event is open to any team of five players, and takes place over the weekend of 8-9 April 2000. Team entry is £25.00 and covers two days entrance into one of the Uks largest wargaming conventions. For more information, contact Phil Nicholls or see the Black Omega website.

Promos-a-go-go

Signed card threshold slashed!

In a move that is bound to please regular tournament goers, Precedence have relaxed the threshold for distribution of signed cards as prizes. Previously the threshold was 24 players - a size rarely met anywhere in the world outside major convention tournaments. In the new year it was cut dramatically to 16 players, making it a real possibility for many UK tournaments.

There were also changes to the rules for the distribution of prizes in general, spreading them down through the winners table and into the 'runner-up' spots of the players that finish second in their race. Whilst these new levels only really effect tournaments with more than 10 players, it makes tournament attendance more lucrative than ever.

Worlds Collide!

Championship cancelled.

In a shock announcement, Precedence revealed that there will NOT be a World Championship this year for any of its three CCGs. There will be a Precedence Championship at GenCon (US) this year, and a European Precedence Championship with a venue to be arranged. There are even rumors that the two champions should meet and play a 'world' game of the new Prec two-player version of B5 'War Without End'

UK World Championship finalist Paul Sheward said - " .. "Its a disaster for the game as a whole that the social gathering of the best players in the world has been scrapped ... The players WANT a world championship, not for the prize support, not for the free trip, but for the TITLE and the chance to drink beer and trade banter with the best."

Following the announcement, Black Omega President Phil Nicholls confirmed that we would still be running the annual 'UK Championship' and 'Black Omega Championship' competitions - despite the fact that the new title at GenCon (US) means there will be no US Champion this year.

Bye Bye Bruce!

Team Pump captain goes Canadian

'Stone Cold' Bruce Mason, one of the original UK Rangers and stalwart rules advisor to Black Omega National events has left these shores for Newfoundland, of all places! Bruce, captain of the Welsh UK Team Champions, has got a new job out in Canada, leaving Wales in the more than capable hands of Richard Willis and Paul Sherward.

Bruce was one of the UKs most active Rangers and an true advocate of interactive play. Bruce will be sorely missed by everyone at Black Omega, and by the B5 scene in the UK. We wish you well mate, and we can't wait till you come home!

In Receipt of

More promo chaos after mistake

The B5 promo *Psi Spies* has finally began to find it's way to players, but not in the manner we all thought. After having the mail-in coupon accidentally left out of two B5 novels, Precedence have began distributing the promo as a mail-in-offer. To get it you have to ...

1. Buy the novel " The Long Night of Centauri Prime" ensuring that your receipt has the name of the book printed on it - receipts saying 'Book' will not do! Copies of receipts are not acceptable either
2. Mail it, along with a SAE and an International Reply Coupon to -

Psi Spies
C/o Precedence Entertainment
PO Box 28397
Tempe, AZ 85285, USA

Black Omega Note - if you can't get a printed receipt from your local shop, try Amazon.co.uk or WHSmith Online. You may also be able to get the card by having the bookseller sign the receipt, stamp it with a shop stamp, and send in one of the front pages of the book, signed also!



In your (Severed) Dreams!

What's hot and what's grot in the new expansion.

Severed Dreams was a very different type of expansion, involving new futures for various characters, as well as providing some new life to some old strategies. It also introduced two new concepts - Babylon Four conflicts and aftermaths, and Nightwatch affiliation. So, what is useful and what should be left in the folder?

Aftermaths - There are a lot of good aftermaths that are restricted to B4 Conflicts (**Rapid Aging**, **Unstuck in Time**, **Flashback**). **Pariah** stands out as a great stumper for huge characters like Luis and G'Sten. **Now He's Ready** is a fast promoter and used correctly **Toast to Victory** has nice synergy with cards like **Carve Up the Galaxy**. **Foiled Scheme** looks good but how many conflicts lose by 25??

Agendas - **Our Own People First** is a great speed agenda, even if you do not intend to play Nightwatch, akin to **Fulcrum of Power**. **Eye of the Storm** looks like a great Unrest agenda but it only really helps to slow the game down - not as good as it looks. The various Home Faction agendas can be fun, esp. in themed decks.

Characters - The meat of the expansion brings something for everyone with new variant Starting Ambassadors, some of which trade off stats for extra special abilities. It's early days as to which cards will get lots of play but **Ranger Lennier** is popular for the conflict recycling ability and **Trakis** is a must in all non-aligned decks. **Delenn (Lennier)** has initial speed, but **Delenn (Promoter)** has more long-term benefit. **Alyt Neroon** gives Minbari military a boost of speed too. Sadly, the chance to expand the Media characters was lost with **Jane** and **Tonia Wallis** being two of the most pointless cards in the game, alongside the ludicrous **Major Krantz**

Conflicts - **Carve Up the Galaxy** may well take the place of the much-battered **Border Raid** in many military decks. **Defuse the Situation** is an excellent protection card for diplomacy heavy decks and makes **Maintain the Peace** almost playable again. **Disinformation** is a great card for a focused Unrest deck and **War Crimes Trial** has a very interesting mechanic - pity it's unique! Of the B4 conflicts, my favourite is **Time Jump**. The worst conflict in the set of **Assume Authority**. The loss of 2 Infl. Is too risky for a leadership conflict and the benefit: +1 power

Contingencies - pretty mediocre bunch. **Overwhelmed** can be a bit nasty if used properly and **Why Are You Hitting Me?** fits well into NA Peace decks. **How Dare You!** Is just a waste of time - discard linked to destiny marks? Who would have thought....

Enhancements - Some really sneaky ones - **Domestic Concerns** is a horrible unrest card and **Dwindling Resources** can hurt some military decks. **Naysayer** adds a whole new dynamic to B5 votes. **Alexander** could be one of the better flagship enhancements, making human fleets akin to **Vree Scouts!** On the down side, **Snoop** is worthless in the current environment where there are maybe five contingencies worth playing and the fact that it uses the words 'Rotate Lorien' makes **Why Are You Here?** a theme deck coaster.

Events - **Alien Scum** is a killer card between the Narn and the Centauri. **Doomed Expedition** is made to hamper **Delenn (transformer)**. **Facing Oblivion** just screams to have a deck made around it somehow. **Not the One** can be deceptively effective in a deck with a few copies of Zathras and **VIP Involvement** can be horrid in the right deck (Use with Euphrates Treaty..). On the down side, **Psi World** is a slow, themed mess, **Xenophobia** is too obscure and a special mention must go to **Secret of Success**, the tournament winner promo that is destined to cause more problems than any other card!

Groups - **Tacticians** is a great card for decks using **Hidden Treasury** and scuppers **Trakis**. **Efficiency Engineers** however... why??? **Oversight Committee** helps already dominant Human Int/Dip decks.

(Note - there are no fleets or locations in Severed Dreams.)

Once more unto the breach..

Moving from also-ran to tournament winner.

Q. I regularly attend tournaments but I never seem to get anywhere. I occasionally get to the final but I have never come close to winning - what can I do to help my game?

Zathras answers ... It's an all too common problem, and not an easy one to fix. In any tournament, only one person can walk away as the winner! Here are some things that might be able to help you.

1. Look at what the other players are doing and learn from their plays. In almost every tournament you are going to see new deck types, new combos and interesting plays. Make a mental note of how you might be able to incorporate them into your decks, or even improve them. Great ideas rarely spring fully formed, and need to be modeled and nurtured.
2. Learn from your own mistakes - which you will make! Learn when to use a NMTB or a LTPF, and when to let something go through. Learn when to attack and when to oppose. Make sure you have a good grasp of the situation on the table - don't lose concentration.
3. Learn to criticise your deck. Look at it closely and see if there are cards that could be left out. Does your card pool allow you to play the deck you have chosen competitively? Can you play a Narn 'Never Again' deck with only five fleets? Is the theme of the deck reliable in a tournament? Does it include Sheridan Reborn? (In which case, give up and go back to the drugs..)
4. Trade! NMTB and Hidden Treasury are excellent, game winning cards but it will take a while before you can get three of each. Gather a set of rares for trade, and see what you can get - you'll be surprised! Also remember that some of the best cards in the game are common and uncommon and that many players have bags of these spare.
5. Be 'game wise' - if there has been a spate of abusive Non-Aligned Chosen of God decks, it might not be the best time to play one, as many players may gang up on you. Similarly, Alliance of Races, no matter what innocence is thrown in it's wake, is always going to get a rough ride.
6. Set your own targets for victory. You don't **have** to win the tournament! Maybe settle for coming at least second in each game, or making the final, or finishing the day with a league point gain?
7. Open aggression rarely gets you anywhere. Only a very solid defence can handle the retaliation of four angry players. Choose your actions carefully and never get carried away with the 'rush' of battering someone as it will only come back to slap you later.
8. Don't rush - take your time and consider what the consequences of your actions will be. Don't let rush you into an action. Just don't be so contemplative that you are accused of stalling!
9. Take everything said by the other players with a pinch of salt. B5 is a game of bluff and counterbluff and one of the great skills is being able to manipulate one players against the other, usually to the gain of the manipulating third party. Play your own game, and if you do ally with a player, make sure you are positive they aren't bluffing..<g>
10. Enjoy yourself. This is the NUMBER ONE rule of any game. If you aren't enjoying it, it's not worth it. Have a laugh, mock people in a silly Londo accent, bash the humans and generally enjoy the event. Winning isn't everything, after all.

(Ed - Sod that! Zathras is a soft wimp! If your not winning, you're not trying!! Crush, Kill, Maim, Destroy.....<Neil has now been sectioned>)

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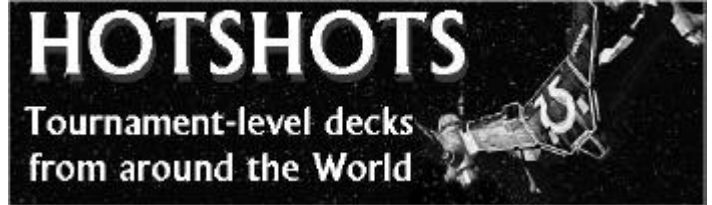


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Hello Old Friend....

Narn Speed Military, revamped and revisited!

Starting hand - 5 Card G'kar, Ko'dath, Build Infrastructure, Independent support, Quadrant 14

Locations - Narn x3

Characters - Narn Captain x3, Na'Mel x3, Ja'Doc x2, Kha'Mak x2, Na'Toth (Variant), Citizen G'Kar

Conflicts - Carve Up the Galaxy x3, Show the Colours x3, Border Raid x3, Limited Strike x3

Events - Meditation x3, Exploration

Enhancements - Commerce Raiding x2

Fleets - Heavy fleet x3, 1st Battle x2, 2nd Battle x2, Expeditionary fleet x3, Strike fleet x3, Support Fleets x3

Agendas - Defense in depth x2, Revenge x2, Never Again

Contingencies - Hidden Treasury x3

Faster, Leaner, Meaner - The Modern Military Deck

A new look at an old concept, Newcastle player Peter Meredith applies some 'magic' rules to B5

Some decks, like hope, springs eternal - one such deck is the Speed Military Deck, as typified by this issue's Hotshot. This deck and variants thereof used to be the everywhere, but the rise of strong Intrigue decks after Psi Corps, and the introduction of crippling cards like Syria Planum and Saboteurs meant they were less frequent. Now, bolstered by the speed of Severed Dreams they have made a comeback. Ex-Magic player **Peter Meredith** explains the theory behind his winning deck..

Efficiency - The starting hand is where it all begins. 5 card G'Kar is the one card that made the rest of the deck possible as it allows you to use the traditional Narn speed start plus you get to put Independent Support and Quad14 in your opening hand. These two are the best accelerators going for a Narn deck and by starting off with them in hand you reduce the need to add multiples of them to your main deck. This lightning start provides you with the maximum amount of virtual influence over the span of the game.

Redundancy - Keeping the size of the deck down to 62 and including multiples of the cards you really want to draw like Commerce Raiding and Kha'mak increase consistency and minimise the number of poor draws. Revenge is the traditional finisher but what do you do if somebody plays Mary Ann Cramer and reduces your tensions? Answer, drop Never Again instead. And, in these We Are Not Impressed saturated days, Defense In Depth makes for a surprise 2 points of influence.

Single mindedness - With 3 Na'mel, 3 Hidden Treasury and 2 Ja'doc, there is little that can deflect this deck from its objective - crushing the opposition like bugs. Don't waste influence or fleets getting involved in other peoples conflicts, it is far better to get other people to support you by offering a Carve Up The Galaxy point than to involve your characters.

Winnable conflicts - All 12 conflicts are easily winnable at the right time of the game. Adopting a Pick On The Centauri attitude with prudent use of your Expeditionary Fleet means Border Raids and Limited Strikes are a cinch, especially with the Support Fleets and Narn Captains to increase base military values. Carve Up The Galaxy is one of the better cards from Severed Dreams, all you have to do is ask the player with the second most military on the board 'do you want a point of influence?' and get him to support the conflict. Show The Colors is a tricky one to win later on but early in the game you should be dropping a large fleet a turn with quadrant 14 helping you out. The common factor in all of these conflicts is that no fleet attacks should ever take place, apart from expeditionary fleet stabs. If you were to play more traditional conflicts like Annex Neutral World and Gunboat Diplomacy, one Minbari war deck or (worse!) one Vree scout can ruin your whole day. You would certainly expend influence on replaying and healing fleets that could otherwise be used to buy extra cards. The same advice goes for war conflicts, they are simply unnecessary and wasteful.

Speed - All the other themes add up to form this one. Conservation of resources, optimum card selection, winning conflicts and a small consistent deck translate to speed. And what does speed make kids? That's right, tournament points!

So what do I do to combat this type of deck? Well, that would have to be the subject of a future article. For now, I would say go out and use a 60 card deck and play 3 copies of WAN!! (Or just hem it in with Non Aggression Pact? - ed.)

Stop the Press! New Rules..

Released literally as we went to press, the WoF rules!

1. The Drakh

1. You do not begin a game as the Drakh, but as one of the standard races, with a regular ambassador. You may switch to the Drakh later in the game using Drakh rule #2.
2. Your first Drakh Ambassador can be sponsored by a non-Drakh character at printed cost, and is immediately promoted to your Inner Circle and becomes your faction Ambassador. Your previous ambassador remains an Inner Circle character and can never be demoted. Drakh are opposed to Vorlon Marks in the same way that Rangers are opposed to Shadow Marks.
3. Once you sponsor a Drakh Ambassador, you are now a "Drakh Faction" and may play Drakh cards as if you were the Drakh race. However, your actual race remains as it was originally. You also retain any other special designations for your faction, such as "Home Faction" or "Psi Corps". If your new (Drakh) ambassador leaves play, you immediately lose the game. Drakh ambassadors cannot seek asylum. A Drakh faction's ambassador cannot be targeted or affected by any effect that would change his position as ambassador.
4. Drakh characters cannot sponsor any card that is loyal to a race other than the Drakh. Drakh cards can only be sponsored by Drakh characters. Drakh cards which can be sponsored cannot enter play by any other means, including Conscriptio, Soul Hunters, New Priorities, etc. Drakh cards that are not sponsored (e.g. Events) can only be played by a Drakh faction/player. If a Drakh card is controlled by a non-Drakh faction, discard it immediately.
5. The Drakh can only win if they fulfill the special victory conditions on a Drakh Agenda, or if all other players are eliminated.
6. Many Drakh cards generate and/or use Chaos Tokens. (Chaos Tokens are all identical, no matter which card created them.) After each of his actions, including a pass action, a Drakh player may move any number of Chaos Tokens from any one card he controls to any one Drakh card he controls.
7. Drakh cards cannot have their racial loyalty changed.
8. The Drakh, as a race, cannot be targeted, named, or referred to in any way by another card.

2. The Interstellar Alliance

1. An ISA member, along with all other ISA members of that race, is expelled from the ISA if: (A) he declares war on or starts a war with another ISA member; (B) he enters a state of war with another ISA member because of an event or conflict he played; or (C) he enters a state of war with another ISA member because of an Agenda he controlled.
2. If the ISA exists: Once per turn, as an action, each player may discard the top card from his deck and forfeit his ability to draw cards during that turn's draw phase to take a card with "ISA" in its effect text from outside the game into his hand (in tournament play, this card must come from the player's reserve). This cannot allow him to exceed normal deck construction limits.
3. If the ISA exists: Whenever a Babylon 5 vote is called for, hold an ISA Vote instead. In an ISA Vote, each player who is an ISA member gets one vote. The ISA Founder calls the vote order. Cards that affect or refer to Babylon 5 votes do not affect ISA votes.
3. ISA cards (cards that have ISA in boldface) cannot be played unless the ISA is in existence.

3. Other new rules.

1. Each race may only have one Homeworld for that race in play at any given time (the Homeworld card's name is irrelevant).
2. If a card already in play becomes your ambassador, and your previous ambassador remains in play, you must transfer to the new ambassador all cards which must target an ambassador.
3. After searching or looking through your deck, always reshuffle unless otherwise instructed by a card.
4. Only one copy of a given Contingency may be revealed per each "trigger".



DATE	CITY	VENUE	RANGER	TYPE
22 nd Jan	Birmingham	Waylands Forge	Chris Slinn	Constr.
29 th Jan	Cardiff	Penarth Crusade 2000	Richard Willis	Demo
30 th Jan	Leeds	Felon & Firkin	Andrew Sims	Constr.
30 th Jan	Coventry	Warwick Uni SU	Neil Palframan	Constr.
5 th Feb	Manchester	Area 51	Shaun Hovers	Constr.
13 th Feb	Leeds	Felon & Firkin	Andrew Sims	Constr.
13 th Feb	Bristol	Captains Log	Richie Willis	Constr.
20 th Feb	Newcastle	McNultys Internet Café	Neil Gow	Constr.
20 th Feb	Coventry	Warwick Uni SU	Neil Palframan	Constr.
26 th Feb	Cardiff	Taff Wells Town Hall	Richie Willis	Welsh Open
27 th Feb	Leeds	Felon & Firkin	Andrew Sims	Constr.
18 th Mar	Carmarthen	The Guild Hall	Richie Willis	Constr.



Players Name	Prev.	Local Play Area
1. Richard James	20	Wales/West
2. Andrew Watson	1	Newcastle
3. Trevor Copley	(new)	???
4. Richard Willis	(new)	Wales/West
5. James Blagden	19	Wales/West
6. David Springate	(new)	???
7. Ty Grover-Jones	4	Wales/West
8. Mike Pemberthy	5	Wales/West
9. James West	21	Wales/West
10. Jon Noakes	12	Newcastle
11. Gordon Skelley	24	Newcastle
12. Giles Lewis	28	Newcastle
13. John McCann	10	Leeds
14. Douglas Howgill	(new)	???
15. Paul Sheward	11	Wales/West
16. Mark Lancaster	9	Newcastle
17. Shaun Hovers	(new)	Liverpool
18. Ralph Holland	16	Newcastle
19. John Wilson	27	Newcastle
20. Ann Rumsby	(new)	Liverpool
21. Peter Meredith	17	Newcastle
22. Roger Hart	30	Newcastle
23. Andy Laken	(new)	Wales/West
24. Craig Johnson	(new)	Newcastle
25. Mark Lawrence	23	Newcastle
26. Rob Wilton	(new)	???
27. Jim Wotherspoon	(new)	Newcastle
28. Freddie Hughes	(new)	Wales/West
29. Chris Dick	(new)	Newcastle
30. Graham Hobson	(new)	Newcastle

Tournament Results

A new feature - your chance to shine!

Newcastle, Constructed, 16/01/00

Players - 14, Venue - McNultys Internet Café
 Winner - Peter Meredith, playing Narn
 Finalists - Andrew Watson (Minbari), Craig Johnson (Centauri), Ralph Holland (Non-Aligned) and Mark Lancaster (Human)

Newport, Constructed, 16/01/00

Players - 21, Venue - Lears Books, Newport
 Winners - Mike Penberthy (Centauri) and Paul Whitehouse (Minbari)
 Finalists - Mark Boulter (Human), Richard Earle (Non-Aligned), Stephen Gold (Narn)

Next Issue..

What you can find in Black Omega #11?

Published at the end of March, this **will** be the last Black Omega before we merge with Legends (the Precedence newsletter formerly known as Agenda) and become the only B5 newsletter in the UK. We'll be going 'out' in style with full build-up to Triples, a first look at Wheel of Fire and more decks, news and strategy than you could shake a Fighting Pike at!

Take care, Neil (Editor bloke)