

BLACK ΩMEGA SQUADRON B5CCG UK NEWSLETTER

The Rangers

Rangers are volunteers who demonstrate the B5CCG and organise tournament and other game related events. Contact them by e-mail or phone

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TRIPLES TRIUMPH!

*Welsh pip Geordies
to Uk title!*

Saturday the 20th March saw the first United Kingdom Tag Team Championship game. Teams of five, led by their regional ranger, converged on Sheffield and the Triples convention to slug it out. Each team had one player representing each race and all points earned by individuals were also added to a team score; the team with the highest score being given the title of "UK B5CCG Team Champions"..

The first round made it clear that the Welsh Team Pump were the ones to be reckoned with, scoring 3 wins and two thirds in the first round. Hot on their heels were Blue Star Geordie, with the only major victory of the first round, and two regular wins. In third position, The Rest of the World. The remaining four teams were somewhat further behind, with only a few points between them. Round two meant that the 8 point gap between the top two teams produced an insane amount of competition. Racing against the clock, Team Pump scored 3 wins and two thirds *again*, with both Ian Richards and Ranger Bruce Mason winning within the time limit. Blue Star had it much tougher, scoring only one win, out of the time limit, a second and three thirds. Round 3 used the Swiss placing system, and the final round top table was made up of: Ian Richards and Paul Sheward, of Team Pump; John Allen and Mark Lancaster of Blue Star Geordie, and James Blagden of Portsmouth. As the results came in, the Geordie team seemed to have everything going their way, winning an impressive major victory and a third place in the final. After all but one of the results were in, Blue Star had closed the gap to a mere 3 points. The "last" game still to come in was the runners up table, pitting Andrew Watson of Blue Star against Bruce Mason of Team Pump. If either of them won it, it would be enough to seal the Team titles. After a tense game on this table, Bruce Mason managed to get the win and Team Pump took the title.

All in all, Everyone said that the team tournament was a huge success. And thanks should go all of the Captains that brought teams. Thanks also to the Sheffield Wargames Society (for the free use of the room at Triples) and The Wargames Emporium for the generous sponsorship of Black Omega Squadron 5.

Triples Team Placings

Team Pump	(Wales)	157
Blue Star Geordie	(Newc)	141
Portsmouth		132
RoW		110
4 Idiots and..	(MK)	100
Oddballs	(Leeds)	76
Delusions of G.	(Sheff.)	50

Triples Faction Scores

Narn Regime	(137)
Non Aligned worlds	(100)
Minbari Federation	(98)
Centauri republic	(90)
Earth Alliance	(87)

ISN News

- Ω 'The Third Age' - the next expansion, has been renamed 'Severed Dreams and will include approximately 150 cards
- Ω The much-delayed Masterpiece Collection has been replaced by a B5 Collectors Set. It will still include the ultra-rare cards like 'Sheridan Starkiller' and 'Emperor Mollari' but will not have the Shadow figure etc. It will cost \$39.99 - best check with your retailer if you have pre-booked the MC
- Ω Psi-Corp has been pushed back again to June - but look to page 3 for a taster of what's to come...
- Ω New Psi-Corps promos have been announced. The set will have three signed cards (Byron, Zathras and Alfred Bester). The Dreaming will be included as the box-card, Psi Arbiters will be included in a future issue of Scrye and Psi Spies will be a redemption offer from the third of the psi-corp related novels published by Del Rey.
- Ω The Summer convention season is upon us and the qualifiers for the World Championships (rumoured to be in Europe) are being planned. Two places will be decided at GenCon UK, with additional slots in Scandinavian, German and Western European qualifiers. More news when we get it for those with the wanderlust!

FOR BEYOND THE RIM... Comment on the B5CCG



Welcome once more to Black Omega Squadron issue 6. I'll follow the example of another publication. The agenda today is to announce that this is a big issue for us. Black Omega has managed to keep the pace with another well known squadron and now, both of us have released the same number of newsletters. What amazing value for all concerned! I digress.

Triples was upon us. Again, Thanks to the lads in the Wargames Emporium and the gentlemen at the Sheffield Wargames Soc for getting us the room. I won't harp on about the greatest tournament in B5 history, instead, some random memories.

- 1) Mic Davy's car breaking down about 200 yards from the guest house.
- 2) Someone else's car breaking down 200 yards from their house.
- 3) My poor choice of curry houses.
- 4) A free for all when Neil announces "Here's the T shirts"
- 5) The way that the Team finals went to the last table.
- 6) The people that managed to keep partying into a nightclub despite having got up 18 hours or so previously.
- 7) Vree TV. (I don't remember much of Sunday..)

If you weren't there, you missed a really good do. The team rules are probably going to be published somewhere. The next big event for Black Omega is to select our champion. It's Gencon for that one - and then they get to go to the worlds and hammer at least one king of cheese. Until issue 7, which could well see us as the "longest running" B5CCG publication....



Building blocks - these are the cards that will form the basic tools of maybe 85% of all the B5 decks that you'll see. Obviously some people will not use them and still do very well, but for utility and flexibility, these are hard to beat.

10. Border Raid (*Conflict, Fixed, Deluxe*)

Why? Because it's the generic Military Conflict. Unless you're opponent has something up their sleeve you can know ahead of time if you'll win it or not - and it raises tensions (bring most into Limited Strike range), and it gets you +1 influence. Why not higher? Well, it is a military conflict and that doesn't fit with all decks.

9. Commerce Raiding (*Enhancement, Uncommon, Deluxe*)

Why? Twofold - Influence is good and Trade Pact is cheese. This is a simple way of gaining an influence and screwing up a diplomacy deck that wants to abuse that method. Admittedly, some people view this as a cheap and nasty trick to gain influence but well... you have to get it from somewhere, right? Why not higher? It's limited and can lie dormant in your hand if you don't get it out quick enough and in itself it is of limited use. Honourable mention also goes to The Eye and Kha'Mak.

8. Short Term Goals (*Event, Fixed, Deluxe*)

Why? Well for every race except the Non-Aligned, this is a very cheap way to gain influence and influence is good. Very little else can be said. There is rarely a time in the game when a STG is not a good move. Why not higher? Again, it lacks flexibility, akin to many of the influence gaining cards.

7. Internal Opposition (*Event, Shadows, Uncommon*)

Why? The current king of the enhancement killers due to a little piece of wordsmanship. IO targets the player and not the card, thus getting around the untargetable We Are Not Impressed. Elsewhere it is cheap, although it needs to be timed correctly as the unrest mechanic can negate it. Honourable mentions for Glitch and Eliminate Threats, two more top Enhancement killers. Why not higher? There are only so many WANI going to be out and there is that unrest factor.

6. Meditation (*Event, Common, Deluxe*)

Why? Because cards in hand are good (Information Overload aside...). You get two cards for one card and one influence - positive card advantage. No other generic card offers that level of return. Chaos Reigns and Different Perspectives are much better but are limited to certain decks. Why not higher? Because card drawing does not win the game - it only gives you the chance to win. Honorable mention goes to Buy New Resources, which has an overall gain three/lose three mechanic, but is a great deck cycler.

5. Conscription (*Event, Rare, Great War*)

Why? Because free is good! The proliferation of We Are Not Impressed and the ruling that it negates the power minus this card has given it more and more power. Played first turn it can get you a juicy fleet to use, or a large character, or your homeworld. Until there are more killer Unrest cards this will be very popular. Why not higher? Three words - Taunts And Games!

4. We Are Not Impressed (*Enhancement, Uncommon, Great War*)

Why? Because we are all sick of those power-jump agendas like Never Again and Rise of the Republic! Because the Vorlons and the Shadows are too cheesy. Because it levels the playing field better than You get the idea? And the card can only be removed by one single card (Internal Opposition) and it can be protected by Guarded Resources.... Why not higher? Well, it is beginning to get a little tedious and it can be wiped out by a judicious psi- or leadership- conflict.

3. Taunts and Games (*Event, Common, Great War.*)

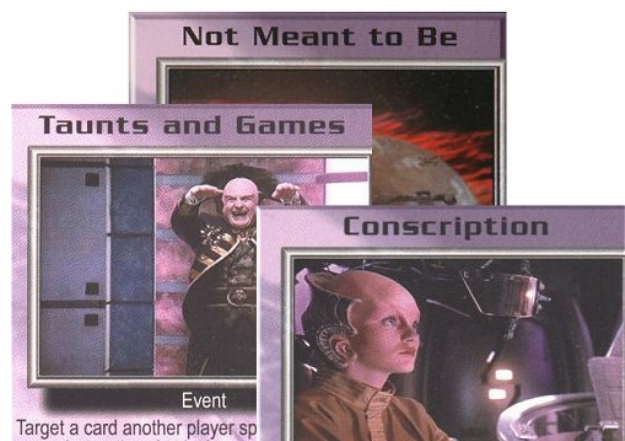
Why? Maybe the most flexible card in the game - it can bounce just about any non-event card back to the players hand - including cards that have been Conscribed! It can even work on agendas, as long as they have been sponsored and not replaced. Critical with cards like Border Raid, to bounce a freshly played fleet before it can oppose the conflict. Why not higher? Well, it eats influence and isn't always that useful - but those times are rare indeed!

2. Level the Playing Field (*Event, Fixed, Premier*)

Why? It was the original 'must have three' card! It allows you to butt into any type of conflict regardless of the composition of your deck. It saves your arse from an unopposed Limited Strike, it can allow Delenn to swing a Show the Colours. It makes Lyta Empowered into a very scary lady. There is rarely a game where the call " Anyone got a level?" doesn't go out at a critical moment. Why not higher? It's an event - see below...., and for some reason people have great difficulty understanding that it does NOT allow you to attack with that ability!

1. Not Meant to Be (*Event, Rare, Deluxe*)

Why? Because 70% of the cards in this list are events and this is the undisputed event stopper of them all. NMTB is the ultimate B5 control card. Barring a few zero-cost cards and some shuffle effects, it stops all events. Dead. It even stops other NMTBs! It's the king card and there should be a very good reason for not having at least two in every deck! And a final honourable mention to Ja'Doc - the Narr, character version of this card that cannot be NMTBd.



Three Events that WILL appear in every tournament - guaranteed! Ω

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Colin Hutchinson's Winning Minbari Deck from the April Milton Keynes tournament

Start hand: Delenn, Muster Support, Rathenn and A Moment of Beauty.

Fleets - Warleaders fleet x 2, D.S Fleet x 2, H/world fleet x 2, 1st B/Fleet, 2nd B/Fleet, 3rd B/Fleet x 2

Agendas - Power Politics x 2, Support of the mighty x 2, Military Buildup, A Rising Power

Groups - Diplomatic Corps

Enhancements - Triluminary x 2, We are not impressed x 2

Aftermaths - Pulling strings x 2, Approval of the gray x 2, Debt of gratitude x 2

Locations - Minbar x 2

Conflicts - Border raid x 3, Affirmation of power x 3, Impasse x 3, Call in a marker x 3, Rally the people x 2, Popular support x 3

Events - Level the playing field x 2, Affirm alliance x 3, Short term goals x 2, Exploration, A Moment of Beauty

Characters - Delenn, Rathenn Shakat x 3, Dhaliri x 3, Acolyte x 2, Hedron x 3, Durlan x 3, Minbari tepe x 2, Warleader Shakiri, Mary Ann Cramer

Just before going to press Black Omega Squadron intercepted the transmission sent from the office of *Administrator Drake*. It appears that someone hacked into various top secret plans and had leaked them to various *pundits* in the media. To avoid the risk of *Front Page Exposure* you must deny all knowledge of any *conspiracy*! Remember what *The Badge and the Gloves* means to you and keep the faith: that way *Nobody Can Stop Us*.

ΩΩΩΩ

I must be brief. The cabinet marked Psi Corp expansion contained over 150 folders. I am able to send scans of only a few now but I can tell you some of the themes I noticed. The Corp appears to function a lot like any normal human faction but members of it will not work for any body unless they are inducted into the conspiracy. Similarly I noticed that they have extreme problems recruiting human mundanes without endangering the secrecy of their conspiracy. Although there are clearly several shadowy figures such as media plant and one, or maybe even two sympathisers, among top level staff on Babylon 5 they clearly are concerned by rogue telepaths, keeping files on both Byron and an unidentified Underground Leader. They also have extensive intelligence on William Edgars and his wife, along with several notes speculating on the existence of an anti-telepath virus.

Unexpectedly the Corp specialise in the covert use of their psionic powers to gain themselves advantages. I uncovered a *Blackmail* plot that could be devastating if used against major figures such as Santiago or Kha'Mak. They also have plans to *divide and conquer* the opposition along with guidelines for *Stealing Secrets* and how to cope if their plans are *exposed*. A tactical analysis shows that their skills will not garner them much influence directly, though their *Mind Games* may do. However many of their plans can be countered to a greater or less degree by good intelligence. They also keep extensive files on telepath use among the other races, noting various of the Centauri's Imperial telepaths along with a file on a telepathic Grey Council member among the Minbari and comments on a Narn telepath hunter.

Although it was to be expected that most of the files were based on The Corp's plans and possible counters to it there were many other documents as well. I noticed comments on a Minbari attempt to *Convene the Grey Council* as well as notes about a *Centauri Festival*. There were a whole raft of documents about how to ferment social unrest leading to *Mass Rioting* along with the formation of *Guerillas* and *Saboteurs*. It's definitely the case that there is information here that can be sold to all the major races, particularly the Non-Aligned whose new Drazi ambassador will be very concerned over the planned *Religious Festival* and tendency of the Non-Aligned to *fight over scraps*.

I hear footsteps so I must go in case my *unauthorized Scan* is discovered. Until we all meet in *A Better Place* I will *Be Seeing You*. D.

ΩΩΩΩ

This document has been copied to operatives *Kelsey* and *Alfred Bester*. I suggest that we alert the *Reprogrammer* and put the *Bloodhounds* on standby as I suspect that we have an *Informant*. In a *War of Information* there can be no prisoners taken and if we suffer casualties then *My Hands are Tied*. Remember *The Corp is Mother*.








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Tournaments - June & July '99

Please check with the Ranger in charge for starting times, directions and any other information.

05/06/99	Area 51, Manchester Lisa Abbott, Constructed
05/06/99	Wargames Emporium Sheffield Chris Hayes, Beginners Social
06/06/99	Fanboy Comics, Milton Keynes Chris Slinn, Constructed
10/06/99	Games Day III, Taffs Well, nr. Cardiff, Bruce Mason, Constructed
19/06/99	Lears Bargain Books, Newport, Wales. Richard Willis, Constructed
20/06/99	McNultys Internet Café, Newcastle Neil Gow, Constructed
27/06/99	Travelling Man, Leeds Andrew Sims, Constructed
03/07/99	Area 51, Manchester Lisa Abbott, Constructed
10/07/99	Taff's Well, nr. Cardiff, Wales Bruce Mason, Constructed
11/07/99	Fanboy Comics, Milton Keynes Matryn Ransom, Constructed
17/07/99	Wargames Emporium, Sheffield Chris Hayes, Constructed
18/07/99	McNultys Internet Café, Newcastle Neil Gow, Constructed
25/07/99	Telefantastique 2, Heathrow * Martyn Ransom, Constructed

* (For details on Telefantastique 2 contact Alison Hopkins at fn62@dial.pipex.com or visit www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/6936 Note: Mira Furlan. Michael O'Hare & others in attendance).

UK RANKINGS

Name Games

1. Andrew Watson	19
2. Matt Bray	8
3. Mike Penberthy	20
4. Ann Rumsby	9
5. Paul Manning	15
6. Hayden Gittens	25
7. Jeff Hill	10
8. John McCann	11
9. Matt Dean	8
10. Ralph Holland	16
11. Kris Aspinall	13
12. Paul Sheward	25
13. Ian Richards	12
14. Colin Hutchinson	9
15. Stephen Gold	9
16. Mark Lancaster	18
17. Craig Harris	11
18. Giles Lewis	12
19. James Blagden	27
20. Steve Salmon	7
21. Ty Grover-Jones	10
22. Chris Slinn	12
23. Jon Noakes	15
24. Simon Overy	11
25. Paul Whitehouse	28
26. Nic Anderson	14
27. Richard Willis	16
28. Ian Clark	11
29. Cliff Jenner	24
30. Neil Palframan	7
31. Crew Kern	9
32. Dave Woods	21
33. Mic Davy	15
34. Jason Millson	13
35. Mark Boulter	12
36. Roger Hart	15
37. Shaun Hovers	9
38. Dave Collier	12
39. Mark Lawrence	12
40. Nick Giles	9

(Criteria - games played for the six month period between 01/10/98 and 31/03/99, players resident in the and having played seven or more games. Ranking system maintained by Carl Skeen.)

NEW LEAGUE SYSTEM IN WALES

A new B5 league is starting in the Wales and West area on June 1st. It will run for 4 months until September 30th. This is a new concept to allow you to play competitive games with your local gaming group as part of a larger league. Contact Bruce Mason, 01222 344356 or masonb@cardiff.ac.uk for more details.

NEXT ISSUE - Maybe we'll have Psi-Corps? maybe we wont? Maybe we'll have Masterpiece? Maybe we wont? We WILL have more news, opinions, some strategy and Agendas for Beginners. Take care - Neil