

# BLACK ΩMEGA SQUADRON B5CCG UK NEWSLETTER

Black Omega is now online at -  
<http://www.prism-comp-tr.demon.co.uk/b5/webpage.html>

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## Black Omega Squadron #7 July '99 - Pre GenCon UK

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# GEAR UP FOR GENCON

Bigger!  
Better!  
Beardier!

Last year, GenCon hosted the two largest B5CCG tournaments in the world. This year should be bigger and better, with a full programme of tournaments, demos and well...beer. The convention, which runs from 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> September is going to be the focal point of the years B5 playing - with all the Uks top players expected to turn out.

**Thursday** - Join the Rangers for their annual knees-up in the afternoon

**Friday** - A sealed deck tournament and a 'Battle for Earth' tournament, showcasing the all-human format. Demos will be going on all day and Rangers will be on hand to help out.

**Saturday** - The UK Nationals, this is the MAIN event!

**Sunday** - The Black Omega Championship, now that's what I call prestige!

The events on Saturday and Sunday both carry substantial prizes including places at the Second B5CCG World Championships in Germany later in the year. Black Omega expects these events to be booked up VERY quickly. To pre-book, e-mail Goth@syspace.co.uk with your request. GenCon UK is the biggest and arguably the best gaming convention in the UK. Held at Loughborough University and organised by WotC, it brings together cardgames, roleplaying, LRP and everything else in one place. Be there, don't be somewhere else! Ω

## ISN News

- Ω The Babylon 5 World Championships will be held in Aachen, Germany at a Universal Cards sponsored event, early in October.
- Ω The semi-mythic Players Guide has appeared again on the schedules. Now referred to as a strategy guide, it is rumoured to be coming pretty soon. Promo hunters will note the redemption scheme within for the 'Spoo' card.
- Ω Battle for Earth is a new tournament format pitching Sinclair, Clark and Bester against each other. More on this format next issue.
- Ω 'Get the Best of Bester' is the Willy Wonka-esque golden ticket hunt in Psi-Corps, with huge prizes going to the lucky five ticket finders. It has been announced that the top prize now includes dinner with Bester himself, actor Walter Koenig.
- Ω The B5CCG Introductory Two Player Game 'War Without End' is scheduled for release in August. Whether it turns up then or is lost in hyperspace is another matter altogether.

## To Be, or Not Meant to Be?

New Ruling Chaos explained, by Bruce.

Ever had a nagging feeling that when you woke up this morning the universe had subtly changed? Well that's what happened to Not Meant To Be. Precedence have recently made two changes to it.

- Ω You can no longer NMTB a card that has been reversed, given that most people assumed that was the case anyway then this is not really a big change.
- Ω If I play NMTB then someone NMTB's mine then the influence I applied for my NMTB comes back to me. This is a result of the "no-cost" rule. To understand this realise that, basically, NMTB has no cost (there is no influence bubble with a cost in it). Instead, the amount of influence you spend on a NMTB is spelt out in the text. Consequently if someone plays NMTB on a NMTB then the player of the original will get all the spent influence back.

To give you an example.

Player A plays Level the Playing Field. Cost 1.

Player B plays NMTB on the Level. No cost for NMTB but must apply 1 influence (the same amount of influence as Player A spent on the Level.)

Player A NMTB's player B's NMTB. Player B gets the 1influence applied for the NMTB back.

## FOR BEYOND THE RIM... Comment on the B5CCG



Welcome to Black Omega Squadron number seven. The pre GenCon one. You'd probably want it also to be the pre Psi Corps one too, but we thought issue six would have been that. Anyway issue seven and the world is still waiting.

What will Gencon do for us? Well, its a chance to meet some of the other players from around the land. Its an excellent time to meet new people, play some excellent games, and argue about the way that you play back home. Its a chance to see some of the elite players in the country smashing on each other ... (more of that next issue).

No, Gencon last year was a huge success, and this year we've actually tried to organise something. We've got a new T Shirt in the pipeline (more black clothing!) There is even a rumour of an adjoining Bar to the hall - obtaining rulings will be so much easier! In addition to all of this there are also two world qualifier tournaments - Will Mike Penberthy manage to defend his UK title on Saturday? Who will emerge victorious as the first ever Black Omega Champion?

There is still time to be part of this! Pre-register now by email: b5@syspace.co.uk, or contact your local ranger. See you in September!

(and did I mention Lara Croft?)



In the B5CCG, the cornerstone of any winning strategy is the choice of agendas. They form the backbone of the deck and map out the way that your perfect game will develop. By learning the pros and cons of the multitude of agendas that are available, you will be able to mould the performance of your deck.

## The Basics

Most agendas can only be brought into play by rotating an Inner Circle character - although the *Shadows* introduced a series of agendas that could be played without the rotation and thus make excellent agendas for early in the game.

You may play an agenda face down, making it a *hidden agenda*. When you do this, you must be able to meet all the requirements to play that card. The advantage of this strategy is that when the card is revealed later in the game, it only requires an action, rather than a rotation, and, as it was not sponsored that turn, it cannot be the target of *Taunts and Games*. The disadvantage is that whilst the card is *hidden* you cannot get any benefits from that card.

There are two ways to change an agenda. Firstly, you can *discard* the agenda. This will leave you without an agenda (allowing you to sponsor a new agenda at a later date). Note that you *can not* discard a major agenda. Secondly, you can *replace* the agenda with another one by rotating an inner circle character. When the card is replaced, it is removed from the game and is thus unavailable for strategies based around *Return to Ideals*. However, as replacements are immune to *Taunts and Games*, this is usually the preferred strategy.

I have split the agendas into three categories - Starters, Mid-Game and Finishers, based on when they are usually played during the game. There is some overlap between these categories though, and new players should not be afraid to experiment.

## Starters

The starting agenda is usually one of the cornerstones of a deck's opening strategy. It needs to give you one (or more) of the following - speed, extra resources or a heavy attribute advantage. The non-rotating agendas from *Shadows* make excellent opening agendas as their mechanic gives you that extra resource (an unrotated character) and they are designed to give some other advantage.

Three stand out as superior; *Build Infrastructure*, *Muster Support* and *Managed Growth*. *Build Infrastructure* is the best, removing the need to rotate characters, thus allowing them to participate in conflicts, lead fleets or attack. *Muster Support* reduces the cost of characters, adding to your deck's speed - (note - reduction operates if you have sponsored four **or less** characters, so it applies to the fifth.). *Managed Growth* allows you to check your next card, and cycle it to the bottom of the deck if it isn't what you want - excellent for getting the best cards early in the game.

There are also agendas that are excellent for specialised decks. *Fulcrum of Power* is a superb agenda for the NA faction. The influence boost and the cost reduction makes for a very quick start. *Servants of Order* is a great start for a deck based around the Vorlons, bringing cards to your hand. *Hand of Valen* was made as the starting card for a Ranger deck.

The best agenda for boosting attributes is *A Rising Power*, delivering a +5 diplomacy boost to influence gaining diplomacy conflicts. Early in the game, that can be a phenomenal boost.

Other starting agendas to consider include *Military Build-Up*, *Disciple of Light* and *The Lure of Shadow*.

## Mid-Game

The mid-game agenda is usually the powerhouse behind the deck. It is the defining strategy component. There are many mid-game agendas, with some being **much** better than others!

For military decks, the war inducing *Empire Builder* and the fleet-tastic *War Footing* are very popular. *Total War* and *Finish the War* also fit nicely here. Conflict generating agendas give decks great value - freeing deck building slots of conflict cards. For intrigue, *Infiltrate* and *Exploit* beats *Knowledge is Power*. For diplomacy, *Power Politics* is a risky, yet profitable venture. Military decks tend to go with the extremely powerful *Seizing Advantage* to ensure a plentiful supply of conflicts.

Again, there are specialised cards for specific deck types; *Alliance of Races* (and less powerfully, *The Hope of Peace*.) fit into decks based on B5 influence, and *Eyes and Ears* is a great card for a Ranger deck.

There are two other cards that need a special mention - *Chosen of God* is the archetypical NA agenda, giving them a distinct advantage in diplomacy/intrigue (with the Pak'mara) or Military (with the Drazi). *Growth in Chaos* is the Centauri agenda that is powering one of the most successful tournament decks at the moment and it also lends a hefty boost to a Centauri Shadow Military deck too.

## Finishers

These cards are played late and generally give a boost to power. They are vulnerable to *We Are Not Impressed* so you should carry *Internal Opposition* to defend against it.

The classic finishers are racially based - *Revenge* and *Never Again*, for the Narn, and *Rise of the Republic* for the Centauri. They will normally garner a +4 power gain, which is a good step to winning the game.

*Order Above All*, *Forced Evolution* and *Playing Both Sides* all revolve around the relationship between the Vorlon and Shadow influence. The first two also have some **very** useful abilities - conflict negation and ship busting.

*Growth in Chaos* and *Higher Calling* both give power bonuses based on the number of shadow or destiny marks you have. Whilst the former is fashionable at the moment, the latter has fallen from grace, due to its doubling of other players marks.

*Defense in Depth* is gaining in popularity, giving you a boost equal to the number of your races planets you have in play. *Support of the Mighty* acts as a power boost for the Humans and the Minbari, as well as acting as a mid-game cost reduction when *Muster Support* ceases to be useful. Whilst *Peaceful Unification* can be used mid-game, it can give a huge power boost to a peace promoting deck.

## What about the rest?

There are many more agendas in the game, but quite frankly they are bilge. ( But go on, prove me wrong!)

Some have been errataed into obscurity ( Seen many *Maintain the Peace* decks recently?), some are just too hard to complete - *Master of All?* *Terra Firma?* Others are just nowhere near competitive for even social tournaments. The question is, what were they thinking when they printed *Vorlon Universe* and *Media Mogul*?? Although some may be useful in certain situations, they are generally restricted to social tournaments, pub games or losers.

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## The Narn-Centauri Regime

By Hayden Gittens, Pan-European Champion

**Starting Hand:** G'kar, Rapid growth, Muster support, Disaffected Centauri

**Agendas:** Revengex3, Seizing Advantage x3, Power Politics x2

**Fleets:** First and Second Battlefleet, Expeditionary Fleet, Strike Fleet x3, Heavy Fleet x3

**Groups:** Thenta Makur

**Locations:** Narn

**Events:** Find Focus x2, Internal Opposition

**Conflicts:** Aggressive action x3, Affirmation of Power x3, Impasse x3, Test Their Mettle x3, Euphrates Treaty x2, Officer Exchange x2

**Characters:** G'sten, Du'nar x2, Na'far, Ja'doc x3, Na'mel, Na'toth x2, Va'kal, Du'rog, Kha'mak x2, Tu'pari x3, Minister Virini, Emperor Cartagia, Urza Jaddo, Lady Morella

Basic idea: Play hand in the first turn, promote disaffected and build to ten. From then on in its politics away. Seizing advantage, thenta makur and Tu'pari is the mainstay of the deck. Seizing allows you to steal other peoples conflicts and play them for yourself. If anyone gets involved let Tu'pari off his leash and hit them, gaining power which is often forgotten about. Basically it's a simple deck to play with lots of fun to be had killing anything that moves (especially Justin). Fun to be had has included impasse followed by extermination targeting Lord Mollari and repeating ad infinitum. With only two characters in the inner circle this really hurts....

## Melting the Cheese

*Growth in Chaos - the last great annoyance*

Black Omega Squadron has had a mission over the last year - we've been quite blatant about it. We hate chesse and we want to hunt it out of the game. We've dismantled the Doom deck, vanquished the Vorlons and done a number on CoG. Now we face the greatest challenge ever. Take down the improbably nasty Centauri Growth in Chaos Shadow monster!

If you are one of the three people on the planet that hasn't met this beast, it revolves around getting as many shadow marks as possible, and then winning with GiC. However, the deck shines because of the almost anti-synergy it has with the current trendy spoiler cards. WANI? Initiate a Leadership conflict using GiC to pump Mollari's leadership. Need speed? How about a free Morden, using GiC's cost reduction ability. Scared of aftermaths? Don't be because you have Justin! SO, how do we beat it.....

**KILL THE CHARACTERS!** - There are usually four characters that are crucial to this deck; Lord Mollari, Justin, Morden (and Mr Morden) and if they are playing smart, a second starting hand character like Centauri Aide or Vir Coto. Justin and Morden provide lots of shadow marks that drive the rest of the deck as well as their in-built benefits - Justin protects from Consumed by Shadows and Morden makes the shadow stuff cheaper still. Target an early Morden (made cheaper using GiC) with Broken Allegiance, and target both him and Justin with Attacking Pawns or Extreme Sanction. The Just Suffer can deal with Vir when he is a supporting character. If any of the characters actually get involved in a conflict it would make sense for decks with high Intrigue to get involved and kill these characters. It WILL slow the deck down.

**KILL THE AGENGA!** - Growth in Chaos needs to be dealt with before the deck can be truly stopped. Any good player will have more than one copy of the agenda, so you may have to do this multiple times. Forced Impairment is an obvious choice, but they can replace the agenda with a different copy and have the conflict fizzle. Try a FI combo with Statement of Position. Diplomatic Intrusion is a good, short-term stop-gap. Remember that an agenda that is sponsored can be the target of Taunts and Games....And finally a good use for WANI! This card kills the deck for one turn (until Londo initiates a Leadership conflict against it..) Back it up with Guarded Resources and extend their inaction. These decks also tend not to have many conflicts at their disposal. Try Test of Merit to stop them from winning - just don't have WANI in play at the time!

**KILL THE MARKS!** - Beyond the cards, the real killer in this deck is the turn it is capable of playing multiple Chaos Reigns and cycles through it's cards, with their cost reduced by GiC and Morden, playing more and more Shadow Marks. Stop the marks and the deck stalls. Most decks run with a first turn Power Play - NMTB it! Even if they don't do it, it's a good card to have in your hand! With a little manipulation you can play Urza Jaddo - making the shadow marks very inefficient. You may want to stock Internal Opposition even if you aren't scared of WANI to punish enhancements like Shadow Medallion. Be aware of the power of the deck and guard your NMTBs and JaDocs. Of course, a three player combo of JaDoc, Soul Hunter and Rogue Soul Hunter would lock down two shadow gaining events a turn.....but it's just not going to happen!

GiC is a wicked deck and the last of the bad solitaires. Who knows, Psi Corps may have some cards that will kill it once and for all? Ω

**CAPTAINS LOG**

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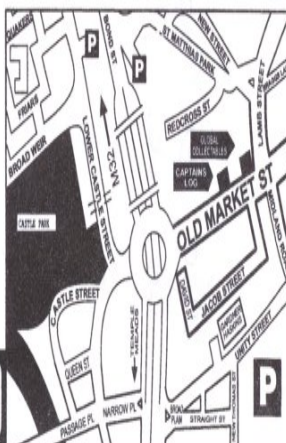
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## Tournaments - June & July '99

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

14/08/99	Lears Bargain Books, Newport
15/08/99	Psi Corps Sealed Deck, League Day <b>North East Championships</b> McNulty's Internet Café, Newcastle
15/08/99	Neil Gow, Constructed ( Psi Corp incl.) Fanboy Comics, Milton Keynes
22/08/99	Chris Slinn, Constructed Captain's Log, Bristol
29/08/99	Bruce Mason, Constructed, League Day Felon & Firkin, Leeds
29/08/99	Andrew Sims, Constructed Fanboy Comics, Milton Keynes
03/09/99	Martyn Ransom, Constructed, League Day <b>GENCON UK, Loughborough Uni</b> Sealed Deck, UK Rangers
03/09/99	<b>GENCON UK, Loughborough Uni</b> Battle for Earth, UK Rangers
04/09/99	<b>GENCON UK, Loughborough Uni</b> <b>UK National Championship</b> Constructed, UK Rangers
04/09/99	Wargames Emporium, Sheffield Chris Hayes, Battle for Earth
05/09/99	<b>GENCON UK, Loughborough Uni</b> <b>Black Omega Championship!</b> Constructed, UK Rangers
12/09/99	Fanboy Comics, Milton Keynes Martyn Ransom, Battle for Earth
18/09/99	Taffs Well, nr. Cardiff Bruce Mason, Constructed, League Day
19/09/99	McNulty's Internet Café, Newcastle Neil Gow, Battle for Earth
26/09/99	Felon & Firkin, Leeds Andrew Sims. Constructed

## UK RANKINGS

Rank	Name	Prev
1	Andrew Watson	1 (-)
2	Mike Penberthy	3 (+1)
3	Paul Manning	5 (+2)
4	Ty Grover-Jones	21 ( +17)
5	Ralph Holland	10 (+5)
6	Paul Sheward	12 (+6)
7	Hayden Gittens	6 (-1)
8	Mark Lancaster	16 (+8)
9	Paul Whitehouse	25 (+16)
10	Richard Willis	27 (+17)
11	Craig Harris	17 (+6)
12	Colin Hutchinson	14 (+2)
13	Nic Anderson	26 (+13)
14	Dave Bailey	(new)
15	Chris Slinn	22 (+7)
16	Mic Davy	33 (+17)
17	James Blagden	19 (+2)
18	Giles Lewis	18 (-)
19	John Allen	(new)
20	Alex Tennet	(new)
21	Alan Davison	(new)
22	Jeff Hill	7 (-15)
23	Cliff Jenner	29 (+6)
24	Jon Noakes	23 (-1)
25	Richard James	(new)
26	Ian Richards	13 (-13)
27	Mark Lawrence	39 (+12)
28	Dave Woods	32 (+4)
29	John Wilson	(new)
30	Stephen Gold	15 (-15)
31	Simon Overy	24 (-7)
32	Jo Tripp	(new)
33	Roger Hart	36 (+3)
34	Gordon Skelley	(new)
35	Bruce Mason	(new)
36	Mark Boulter	35 (-1)
37	Jason Millson	34 (-3)
38	Alan Harris	(new)
39	Kevin Dunn	(new)
40	Dave Collier	38 (-2)

( Criteria - games played for the six month period between 01/01/99 and 30/06/99, players resident in the UK and having played seven or more games. Ranking system maintained by Carl

**NEXT ISSUE** - The biggest issue of BOSq ever! Black Omega travels to GenCon UK! The regular issue has all the usual news, decks, an introduction to Psi Corps and rankings. The GenCon issue has a special insert with the hype for the years biggest events, player profiles, rules summaries and even some fun stuff and a competition! Ω