

BLACK ΩMEGA SQUADRON

B5CCG UK NEWSLETTER

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

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It's here... just!

Sold out and badly distributed, Psi Corp rocks!

FINALLY, after seven months of delays and setbacks, players of the B5CCG finally got their hands onto the Psi Corps expansion, but the joy of crisp boosters and new cards was not felt worldwide.

Due to a problem with getting the cards from the distributors, many stores in the US have yet to receive their cards at time of writing (Aug 19th) whilst the UK and Ireland got theirs weeks beforehand. This problem has caused rumours that international distributors have been selling their boxes back across the Atlantic to support the US market. Worse still, the news from Ppub that Psi Corps is sold out at their end, means that the cards that are at the distributors now are all there is to buy.

What impact this has on the game in the US, or the secondary market in Psi Corp, is yet to be seen.

The Best Team in the World?

Team Pump take the Lowlands by storm - Penberthy triumphs (again..)

The Lowland Championships, held at GenCon Benelux, Antwerp, this year, felt the full power of Team Pump (UK Team Champions) as **FOUR** of their squad that travelled made the final of the World Championship qualifying event.

A field of 35 saw the Welsh team crush all that came before them - with Mike Penberthy, Paul Sheward, Ty Grover-Jones and Ranger Richard Willis making the final alongside German player Carsten Zirkler.

Penberthy triumphed, playing Non-Aligned, booking himself a place at his second consecutive World Championships. Ranger Wim Van Acker was quoted on the Rangers Mailing List saying 'Well...they showed us, Lowlanders, how the game has to be played. Even the Germans, who sent some good players could not deal with them,...'

Look for more Pump Action at GenCon!

FOR BEYOND THE RIM...
Comment on the B5CCG



Black Omega 3:16

We are now the longest running B5CCG publication. 8 issues ago it all started as a bit of a dream when Phil Nicholls suggested to the UK Rangers that we should have go at our own little support organisation for players in the UK. I think at the time we all thought it would work for a couple of months. We didn't expect anything like what actually happened! Anyway, Today's Agenda is not self gratification...

Welcome to the B5CCG event of the year! Black Omega returns to Gencon UK with the business of finding the best players in the country. We present no less than three solid days of b5 gaming! Four tournaments, two to warm up on and then onto the main events! Saturday sees the UK title put up for the second time! Sunday sees the selection of our very own Black Omega Champion! Both will receive invites to the World Championships being held in Germany in October. In the last worlds both of the UK players placed in the top 8. Can it be repeated this year?

So this is the last chance you'll have to get your decks ready - will the newly released PSI corps be making all the difference?

I'd like to thank House Atreides for the sponsorship of this, our biggest ever issue. I'd also like to thank Marcus and the staff from Esdevium for their assistance in setting everything up and booking the hall. Phil Nicholls, Bruce Mason and Neil Gow will be looking after you in the tournaments. Play the games, have fun and then meet us in the bar for a drink or six afterwards

The UK Rangers (aka The VodkaShok!)

A Message from the Editor

Whilst this edition is not about self congratulation, I thought I'd crawl from under my PC for a while and just thank everyone who has helped with BOSq over the last year - especially the advertisers who have supported us so loyally. Without the shops and traders that support us we would never be able to do this, and the UK would not have the most organised B5 scene in the world.

Thanks - Neil

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Playing With Your Head: Making Friends and Gaining Influence with the Psi Corp

Ok, so you've got the cards, nobody's scribbled all over your Alfred Bester or vandalised your Byron by stamping something on it and you want to play The Corp and dress in black a lot. Then you get stuck as you wonder how on Syria Planum you can win games with this bunch. Well there are two main ways to victory: the normal application of speed or more devious methods. First though it is handy to look over the key cards for the Corp.

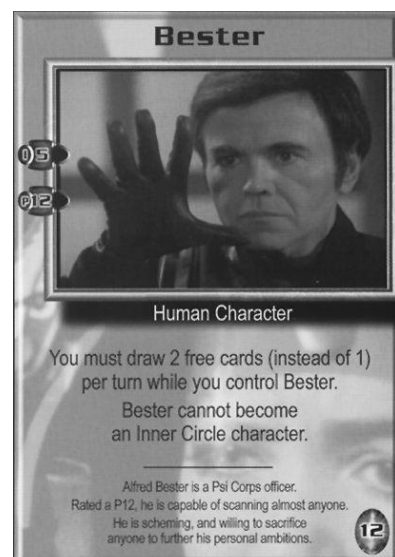
Agendas. In many ways the Corp function almost like a whole new race rather than a human faction so they have a whole raft of new agendas. However, as long as you have the conspiracy marks spare, you're not forbidden from using other human agendas such as Alliance of Races. That aside, The Corp have 3 new agendas: Nobody Can Stop Us, The Corp is Mother and Come Join Us (not actually a PC agenda but in the starter deck). The first thing you need to do is to throw the last two agendas in your binder and leave them there. I've never yet got anything out of Corp is Mother that I couldn't get better with Build Infrastructure. If you must play with TCiM then try an opening hand of it with Psi Corp Intelligence and Black Omega Pilot (or Chen) to maximize its use. On the other hand Nobody Can Stop Us gives you two huge advantages: 1) it gives all your PC cards strife marks and it helps turn your Psi conflicts into influence. My standard opening hand is Psi Corp Intelligence, Human Agent and Nobody Can Stop us. Other agendas that work well with the Corp are Thought Police in an unrest deck and Support of the Mighty in any deck. Hunting the Blips can be a handy sideboard card if you expect to see other teeps around. Finally if you must use Come Join Us think of it in combination with informant.

Characters. These define your strengths and weaknesses. Obviously you can do Psi but the Corp are one of the strongest around in intrigue and, with Sleeper Personality and Asimov Laws I would rate the Corp as potentially better at intrigue than the Centauri. The Corp can of course use Special Intelligence as well as the best human intrigue characters (Sarah, Zak, Clarke) and the neutrals (Wade, Abbutt and Edgars). The biggest weapon against the Corp is diplomacy as they have surprisingly strong military defences. I've been hit by Test Their Mettle too often. Also though be worried about Ill Fated Reverses if you get a doom mark. (Which is why I stay a long way from Chen and Laurel Takashima). Your key characters are Matthew Stoner for intrigue, The Reprogrammer and Thirteen for the big guns, Gordon as a good first person in a conflict. You might also want to consider using a Techno Mage or two. If you feel really ambitious use Seductive Loyalties to sponsor some Telepath Recruits.

Conflicts. Psi conflicts rarely gain you influence directly. Blackmail can (if targeted right) as can Mind Games (make sure you have Dark Talia with telekinesis and a PPG rifle ready to whack anyone who tries to stop you). However, with NCSU and Further Gains you can convert your psi conflicts into influence. Given that you can choose conflicts that hurt someone else. The unrest raising conflicts can be good for this as you can peg the target back later. Telepathic scans and Psi Attacks also have good nuisance value. Finally, consider using John Sheridan so that you can launch 3 psi conflicts per round. On the other hand you can always load up with Disruption, Prey on the Weak and Is that the Whole Truth? to speed up if you're not using NCSU.

Other key cards. Be Seeing You. Insufficient Support. Badge and the Gloves. Star Chamber. Between them these cards can get you all the conspiracy marks you will ever need and can slow down other decks which are going faster than you. They're Just Mundanes is ideal if you're starting with a human agent. If you've got Gordon and/or Mary Anne Cramer then you can pack 3 Well Publicizeds for your Disruptions and so on. Expanded Network can (currently) be used to promote a neutralized character in an emergency. Finally any deck should think of carrying 3 Burnt from Both Ends.

Strategy. Although the Corp can be played as a speed deck using intrigue it is far more interesting to play as a "control" based deck. It is far more complex to play in that manner as you have to be able to haul back those decks that go racing away from you. You can do this through unrest or by stealing their characters, putting their best cards on the bottom of the deck, knocking cards out of their hand, preventing them from gaining influence from their conflicts and messing with their agendas. The sample deck is a basic Psi Corp control deck. It's not a tournament winning deck but it is a good place to start: more of a P5 than a P12.



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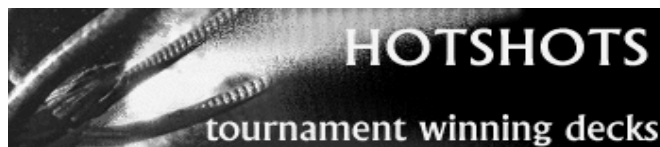
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The Kick Boxing Corp Deck...

Starting Hand: Bester, Psi Corp Intelligence, Human Agent, Nobody Can Stop Us.

Characters (15): 2*Kelsey, Talia, Dark Talia, 2 Black Omega Pilots, Matthew stoner, Reprogrammer, Alfred Bester, Thirteen, Gordon, Harriman Gray, Bloodhounds, Miss Constance, Rogue Soul Hunter.

Fleets (7): 2*Black Omega Auxiliary, Black Omega Fighters, Elite Black Omega, Homeworld Fleet, Deep Space Fleet, Fleet of the Line.

Groups (2): Star Chamber, Telepath Recruiters.

Locations (1): Syria Planum.

Agendas (4): 1 Nobody Can Stop Us, 3 Support of the Mighty.

Conflicts (14): 2 Sleeper Personalities, 2 Black Mail, 2 Asimov Laws, 2 Psi Attacks, 2 Telepathic Scans, 2 Mind Games, 1 Forget Something, 1 We Think Alike.

Aftermaths (5): 3 Be Seeing You, 2 They're Just Mundanes.

Enhancements (6): 3 The Badge and the Gloves, 1 Telekenesis, 2 PPG rifles.

Contingencies (7): 3 Further Gains, 2 Steal Skills, 2 Hidden Treasures.

Events (19): 3 Meditation, 3 NMTB, 2 Burnt from Both Ends, 2 Insufficient Support, 3 Mu Tai Exhibition, 1 Expanded Network, 1 Obey, 1 Pain, 2 Internal Opposition, 1 Marked Out.

Obviously this is a bit fatter than the average tourney deck. It does however have several accelerators in it (Meditation, Mu Tai and Burnt). Opening strategy is simple: sponsor PCI and use it to look for your first Corp characters and a fleet. Meanwhile sponsor and promote the agent and build to 10. Once you have a teep in play and an emergency fleet in hand train the PCI on a player and keep it there. The idea is to slow them down so put any power gain agendas, Test Their Mettles and other influence gainers on the bottom. The rest is simple. Try to play a psi conflict every round. Try and steal characters who will qualify for Support of the Mighty. Use Be Seeing You and Insufficient Support on someone close to a win. Be prepared to use Psi Conflicts against WANI, aim your Blackmail against either kha'Mak or a big neutralised IC character. Play a few games to get a feel of how the cards interact then start tailoring it to suit your style. Finally, Psi Corp decks do tend to be rare intensive, sorry about that but if you want to play a control based deck you really need multiples of Further Gains, Be Seeing You, NMTB and They're Just Mundanes.

NEW RULES FOR OLD!

The Implications of the new Version 1.3 rules from Psi Corps

Psi Corps saw yet another permutation of the B5CCG rules come into effect (although this time we actually got all the pages....) Alongside the new rules for Conspiracy Marks and the Psi Corps faction, there were a smattering of changes to the previous set of rules that will have a profound impact on the game.

Change to the Non-Aligned Starting Hand

The Non-Aligned have been neutered in this expansion to the point where some rangers have been wondering whether they will be able to get a NA player in their tournaments. Their starting position has been changed from one additional IC Ambassador, to one additional Ambassador in their starting hand. This radically slows the NA Intrigue deck, and although it doesn't hurt the Drazi Military machine too much, the inclusion of Trdiker in the set may well hamper them. The jury is still out as to the effect this will have in the long term, although it may well result in less brutal NA decks.

Redefinition of the Effect of Negative Power

This is the BIG change. Remember those Minbari Military Conscription decks, powered by the ruling the Conscription produced a negative modifier to Power and that modifier was thus negated by WANI? Gone! Now, if your Power is less than your Influence, WANI (and To Stand Alone) don't effect you. Basically, when WANI is in effect you count the lowest of your Power or Influence. Whilst this clears up what was an obvious problem with the rules, it still hasn't stopped the game tending to come down to a battle over the removal of WANI.

The Personality Rule

This recognises that certain characters (Ivanova and Cmdr. Ivanova, Morden and Mr Morden etc) are the same character and therefore cannot be in play at the same time. As the expansions continue to move characters through their development in the show (When will we see a replacement Garabaldi?) this is a timely rule to stop more abusive combos.

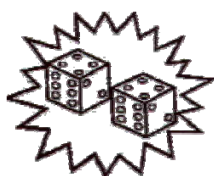
Boldface cannot be Blanked

All the phrases that are in bold on a card cannot be blanked by Forced Impairment, Disarray etc. You can no longer remove Marcus' ranger status, make Agents limited or remove N'Grath's mercenary status. It didn't happen often, and now it can't happen at all.

Certain Civil War rules made Optional

The rules that give opposing factions a reduction of power and higher power requirements for victory have been made optional. This is a set to make dual faction finals winnable by the players in those factions, which, under the old rules, was pretty difficult! A minor change, but a welcome one too.

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| 18/09/99 | Taffs Well, nr. Cardiff Bruce Mason, Constructed, League Day |
| 19/09/99 | McNulty's Internet Café, Newcastle Neil Gow, <i>Battle for Earth</i> |
| 19/09/99 | Cardiff Games, Cardiff Bruce Mason, Demonstration |
| 25/09/99 | Cardiff Games, Cardiff Richard Willis, PsiCps Sealed Deck, League Day |
| 26/09/99 | Felon & Firkin, Leeds Andrew Sims, Constructed |
| 02/10/99 | Antics, Plymouth Damien Ashton, Demonstration. |
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| 23/10/99 | GaelCon, Dublin, Ireland. Ireland's premiere gaming convention. |
| 31/10/99 | Dave Bushe, Sealed Deck plus others. Felon & Firkin, Leeds Andrew Sims, Constructed |

Every Wednesday there are demonstrations at the following venues..

Offworld Collectibles, Chatham, Kent - Bruce Chadwick
Comics Plus, Aldershot, Hants - Steve Smith

UK RANKINGS

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

(Criteria - games played for the six month period between 01/02/99 and 31/07/99, players resident in the UK and having played seven or more games. Note - some tournaments may not have been reported in time to be included. Ranking system maintained by Carl Skeen.)

NEXT ISSUE - Excuse me? You expect another issue after this? Oh go on then! We'll bring you blow by blow coverage of ALL the events at GenCon and the World Championship including the winning decks. Grey Council will look at Battle for Earth and all the normal stuff and nonsense too. (Will that all fit in 4 pages? I'm not sure...) Appearing at a ranger near you, late October. Ω

BLACK ΩMEGA SQUADRON

B5CCG UK NEWSLETTER

The Rangers

Gencon UK promises to have the largest gathering of UK Rangers ever - watch out for the slightly punch drunk people clutching late ruling e-mails..... These three reprobates (joint winners of the 'only their mothers could love 'em' contest.) will be your Rangers for the two BIG events.

Phil Nicholls

Admired by men, loved by women, harangued by Germans - Phil is the European Distribution Ranger and the 'president' of Black Omega Squadron. He used to be Ranger for Sheffield before he was seconded to the Post Office and given his very own munchkin as a helper.

Phil will be Admin Ranger for the tournaments - sorting out the scores and the tables. Interrupt him at your peril!

Bruce Mason

The esteemed captain of Team Pump, Bruce is one of the Rangers that covers the 'Title Triangle' (Cardiff, Bristol, Reading.) Bruce is infamous for his tenacious pursuit of perfection in the field of rules interpretation, and the abolition of co-operation points from the game.

Bruce will be Rules Ranger for the tournaments - answering rules questions and keeping you little bolshy buggers in order. Don't argue - comply.....because Bruce knows best!

Neil Gow

Ranger for Newcastle and captain of Team Blue Star Geordie, Neil also manages to edit BOSq, make those t-shirts and breed like an epileptic salmon. Neil has never pretended to actually understand the game, nor to be any good at it - he's just here because he can't say no....

Neil will be Troubleshooter Ranger for the tournaments, collecting scores, sorting problems and generally doing his headless chicken impression.

GENCON UK SPECIAL

You thought last year was good?
Wait until you get a load of this!

Gencon UK 99 will host not one, but two World Qualifier events. Saturday will see the UK Nationals (won last year by Mike Penberthy) and on Sunday the Black Omega Championship, a new event replacing the Pan European Championship, will be contested. The winners of the tournaments will receive an invitation to the Second World Championships in Aachen, Germany, October 1999. In addition there will be a plethora of other prizes including a set of beta play-test decks for the Premier Edition.

The Schedule

Thursday

During the afternoon, the UK Rangers will be having their annual get-together, in the bar attached to Victory Hall. Everyone is invited to come along and join in the fun, buy the T-Shirt (literally) and watch as semi-respectable men and women degenerate into piles of gibbering Pak'mara. You may also want to consider visiting the Trade Hall early - last year the good tourney cards disappeared out of the folders long before Saturday morning, leaving a lot of people disappointed.

Friday

Sealed Deck. - a warm-up tournament with a maximum of 20 players.

"Battle For Earth" constructed deck - Explore this innovative format that features tables of 3 players, each one playing one of the human factions. A game of exploitation and resource manipulation, this tournament promises to produce some intriguing deck designs. Maximum 15 players.

Saturday

UK Nationals constructed deck - The (second) most keenly fought for prize in the UK. The winner of this tournament will represent their country at the B5 World Championships in Germany. This is the highlight of the B5 year in the UK and promises to be a hard fought affair. There will be blood on the carpet! Maximum of 40 players.

Sunday

Black Omega Squadron Championships constructed deck - this is the title every UK B5 player wants. Is it more prestigious than the UK title? You bet it is! Even better, for those that failed yesterday, it's another chance to grab a place at the World Championship table and kick international botty! Maximum of 40 places.

The Running Order for the Championships

Because these are expected to be large tournaments we will be strict about time keeping. If you miss the times you run the risk of forfeiting that match. Both days will be run to the following schedule.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 09:00-10:00. | Registration. (if you have pre-registered please make yourself known to Phil to confirm your presence). |
| 10:20 | Races announced |
| 10:40 | Round 1 Set up (i.e. sit at table, reveal ambassadors, sideboard, shuffle) |
| 10:50 | Round 1 start |
| 12:10 | Round 1 end |
| 12:25 | Round 2 set up |
| 12:40 | Round 2 start |
| 2:00 | Round 2 end |
| 2:15 | Round 3 set up |
| 2:30 | Round 3 start |
| 3:50 | Round 3 end |
| 4:20 | Final set up, start when ready - There is no time limit for the final round. |

Floor Rules

In addition to the normal floor rules for a tournament there will be a number of additional floor rules in force. Each player will be handed a copy of these floor rules when they register. It is the responsibility of the player to read and clarify these rules with any of the tournament presiding Rangers.

The Ombud's 10 Most Wanted

They keep cropping up at your tournaments, they always seem to get to the finals and win them, they are the top ten B5 players in the UK* and they are the people to beat if you are going to win that all important invite to Germany. Here's the low-down on them by the people that know them best - their Rangers!

#1. Andrew Watson - Newcastle

Andrew is probably the most all-round CCG player I know. After three years of Magic he converted to B5 two years ago and has been the man to beat in Newcastle ever since. He is an excellent adapter of new ideas - seeing an innovation and then refining it into a super-effective deck. His greatest strength is his huge array of tricks to win games (mind games, bluffing and outright intimidation) and his amazing mental arithmetic. His major weakness is his addiction to nicotine and the effect stress has on his game.

#2. Nic Anderson - Portsmouth

One of our younger players at 14 he generally makes it plain from the start what his decks do and they are usually very single minded and quick. He hasn't yet managed to work out how to take the pressure off himself in the final few rounds but he still manages to win lots of games. His winning decks are usually Military based although he has tried several other types from time to time. He did make a large mistake in one game that he didn't notice because he was talking to someone else and not paying attention, he put his hand face down on the table and carries on chatting then picked up his reserve pile by mistake and didn't notice but then again neither did any of the other players. This is now known around here as the Anderson maneuver.

#3. Ty Grover-Jones - Cardiff

Ty is one of the most unpredictable of the top players. One day he'll build a deck that'll stall nine times out of ten, the next he'll romp home without breaking a sweat. I suspect that he puts more thought into the "meta-game" than most players, sometimes to the detriment of his own deck. When he gets it right though it leaves you scratching your head wondering how on earth he managed to win.

#4. Darren Littlehale - Milton Keynes

Darren the dark horse from the Black country. His decks are pretty aggressive and gorgonzola free, he enjoys a good fight and isn't afraid to lump people. Beware his Vorlon tendencies, he only speaks when absolutely necessary, but when he does watch out it could cost you the game. Finally he is well respected by his local Rangers as he's not beyond bribery, he always brings choccie biscuits to tourneys for the Rangers, making him a top player in our opinion.

#5. Richard Willis - Cardiff

Gained notoriety by being coup-de-graced in the first round of the UK nationals last year. Richie plays with obsessive decks. If you don't want to be bogged down, or out of the looped or sneak attacked or a 101 other equally nasty things, don't play Richie. I think I would rather stick my arm in a meat grinder than have to face Richie in a final, it would be less painful.

#6. Mark Lancaster - Newcastle

Mark was a CCG playing virgin before B5 - a collector at heart, he played a demo and was hooked. His tight deck building skills and (in the most part) tenacious attitude have made him the man to beat in Newcastle after Andrew Watson. Mark probably considers the metagame, and the decks other people may play, more than most, resulting in some very interesting deck choices. He swings from almost vein blowing stress to off hand resignation to defeat in as many minutes, but can be relied upon to force you to the wire.

#7. Mike Penberthy - Reading

Last year Mike won the UK Nationals by persuading everyone that he was "only there for the promo." Since winning that event he has, in a 12 month period, won the Welsh Championship, UK Team Championship and European Championship. He has more titles than a copy of Burke's peerage. Mike's strength lies in two areas: making deals and stealth victories.

#8. Paul James Whitehouse - Portsmouth

Generally good player who along with Hayden has nearly mastered the art of persuading people that they're not going to win this turn and putting all the pressure on another player and then slipping in a quick influence gain at the end of the turn and winning. This has happened so many times it's too many to count. Usually quite a vocal player pointing out that other people are going to win. Good strategist and he builds decks that can handle most situations, but some are a bit too long winded play wise and are beaten by quick speed decks. He's also getting married on the 11th September so he's got to get very drunk whilst at Gencon.

#9. Hayden Gittens - Portsmouth

He is probably the best player I've seen for diverting attention from himself and very careful wording of everything he says whilst playing. He's generally quite quiet during play. A very good strategist he builds a variety of decks that are all very good and he's currently up to 14 or 15 tournaments wins (if not more) including last years Pan-European championship. He is also a very good bluffer and likes to sneak the win from under someone else's nose. The best way to make him lose a tournament is to have his future girlfriend there for the final so that he's not concentrating on the game at all, this has been tried and it works even in the final.

#10. Ralph Holland - Newcastle

We are all still trying to work out how Ralph got this high, given his penchant for Human Military and Ranger decks. Ralph was another CCG virgin before B5 and carries more of his love of the show into his deck building than most players. For months he single-handedly carried the torch for the Humans in the midst of the Pak'mara/Shadow/Conscription assault. A dark horse in most tourneys, his day will come soon...

* Top 10 players at time of writing - rankings may have changed since then



G'KAR ENLIGHTENS...

Is it the most confusing rule in the game?
The 'Zero Cost Rule'
The one about T&G and NMTB
The one that no-one understands
This is from Kevin at Precedence
It is the definitive guide.
You no longer have an excuse.....

OK, let's set the record straight on the zero-cost rule....

1. A card that does not have an orange bubble with a number in it has a cost that is "undefined" as far as other cards are concerned.
2. "Undefined" does NOT mean zero!!!
3. It is impossible to apply an "undefined" amount of influence or purge an "undefined" number of marks.

An enhancement with an undefined cost will say in its game text how it enters play. As far as the "zero-cost rule", look for the orange cost bubbles; they are the key.

Examples:

Forces Collide states "Apply influence equal to the cost of the enhancement, plus 1 per Vorlon Mark required to play the card. Discard the enhancement."

Q: Can I use Forces Collide to discard Shadow Tech Upgrade?
A: NO. Shadow Tech Upgrade does not have an orange cost bubble. The fact that STU's game text makes you apply influence when you play it is irrelevant.

Q: Can I use Forces Collide to discard Recalled?
A: NO. Same reason as STU.

Q: Can I use Forces Collide to discard a Forced Impairment?
A: NO. Forced Impairment states that "If successful, this conflict becomes an enhancement on the target card." Forced Impairment does not have an orange cost bubble. Therefore, its cost is undefined.

Moral Quandry states "The owner of the character may negate this event by applying influence equal to the character's cost."

Q: If somebody plays Moral Quandry on Delenn, can I negate the effect for free?
A: NO. Delenn's cost is undefined. THIS IS A RULING REVERSAL FROM AN OLD, PREMIER-ERA RULING.

Q: If somebody plays Moral Quandry on Commander Ivanova, can I negate the effect for 6 influence?
A: Yes. The fact that Commander Ivanova is played for free is irrelevant; her orange bubble has 6 influence.

Full Mobilization states "The cost for you to sponsor, play or promote any card is increased by an amount equal to your unrest."

Q: Does Full Mobilization increase the cost to play Aftermaths? Agendas?
A: NO. Undefined plus 1 is still undefined.

Forced Evolution states "Rotate agenda and apply target fleet's influence cost to neutralize 1 fleet with Military less than Shadow Influence...."

Q: Can I target the First United Fleet with Forced Evolution?
A: NO. The United Fleets have no orange bubbles; their influence cost is undefined.

Taunts and Games states "Target a card another player sponsored since your last action. Apply the same amount of influence the player applied."

NOTE: Taunts and Games does not refer to "cost". The word "cost" does not appear anywhere on the card. Therefore, it is not affected by the zero-cost rule.

Q: Can I T&G an agenda?
A: You may T&G an agenda that is SPONSORED, but not an agenda that REPLACES another agenda. Replacing is not sponsoring (even though you must rotate an Inner Circle character to replace an agenda, in most cases).

Q: Can I T&G a United Fleet?
A: Yes. The United Fleet returns to its owners hand. The fleets that were discarded to play the United Fleet are NOT RETURNED TO PLAY.

Q: Can I T&G a card that was Conscripted?
A: Yes. The Conscripted card is returned to the owner's hand. The power penalty and Unrest increase remain in effect!

Not Meant To Be states: "You must apply influence equal to that applied by the event's player, plus 2 influence per mark required to play the event."

NOTE: NMTB does not refer to "cost"! The word "cost" does not appear anywhere on the card! NMTB is totally unaffected by the zero-cost ruling.

Q: Can I NMTB a card like Declaration of War?
A: Yes! You "apply influence equal to that applied by the event's player", which is zero.

Q: Can I NMTB Short Term Goals?
A: Yes! Same reason as Declaration of War (it does however requires 2 influence as STG requires a destiny mark.)

There's one other thing you should know about NMTB & costs. NMTB says "Reverse the printed effect text..." Please note that orange cost bubbles are NOT effect text. If somebody NMTB's your event, and you applied influence because your event had an orange bubble, you do NOT get your influence back. If somebody NMTB's your event, and you applied influence because the event's game text says to, you get the influence back.

For example, if Londo plays Shadow Strike, "Target a fleet. Apply an amount of influence equal to the target fleet's current Military." and applies influence, and Delenn plays NMTB on it (applying 9 influence herself because Shadow Strike requires 2 marks), then Londo gets back his 5 influence.

And because I know somebody will ask, here's the nightmare scenario: Sinclair plays Popular Support, applying 1 influence as per its cost bubble. Londo plays NMTB on Popular Support, applying 1 influence as per NMTB's game text. Sinclair does NOT get back his 1 influence. Delenn plays NMTB on Londo's NMTB, applying 1 influence as per NMTB's game text. Londo gets back his 1 influence because he paid it to satisfy game text, not an orange bubble cost.

OK, are we all clear on this now?

Battling Across Earth!

The best of the best battle for those elusive invites to Aachen

Since the end of July, players across the world have been battling to secure a place at the B5CCG World Championship which will be held on 8-10 October in Aachen, Germany. Here are some of the details of the winners so far from countries far and wide...

German

Mainz - Peter Endear (Erlangen, Germany) - HUMAN
Mainz - Marco Schutz (Krefeld, Germany) - NA

Continental

Benelux GenCon - Mike Penberthy (Reading) - NA

Canadian

Orleans ON - Chris Myers (Watertown, NY) - HUMAN

United States

West - Sam Black (El Sobrante, CA) - NARN
Mid West - Mike Calhoun (Mountain View, CA) - MINBARI
East - Nathan Bruinooge (Silver Spring, MD) - NA
Southeast - Sean Flaherty (Duluth, GA) - NA
Central - Austin Marsall (Missouri City, TX) - HUMAN

Leading to the US champion...

GenCon - David Sisson (San Mateo, CA) - NA

Nordic

Helsinki - Henri Huhtanen (Turku, Finland) - NARN

And the UK, BOSq and Australian champs are still open!

Rules of Conflict

The Battle for Earth rules guide - compressed version!

Battle for Earth - Constructed Deck Format

In 'Battle for Earth' tournaments all players will play 1 of the 3 available Earth Factions. Starting ambassadors for this format include: Jeffery Sinclair, William Morgan Clark, and Bester. Rules for this tournament are unchanged from those for a standard tournament with a few exceptions that are noted below.

Rule Changes

The following rules are to be used for this specific tournament format.

- Ω *Starting tensions for all factions will be 5 towards all other human factions.*
- Ω *Babylon 5's influence will start the game at 0, and no effect in the game can raise or lower this starting value.*
- Ω *There are no effects that can generate a Babylon 5 vote. Effects that would do so are ignored.*

Scoring

These are changes from the standard scoring format for constructed decks.

- Ω The winner receives (only if victory was achieved) + 1 point
- Ω No cooperation points are awarded in this tournament format.

Points Table

| Players | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | |

WINNING AGENDAS

Here they are again, the updates of the winning agendas from hundreds of B5 tournament games. Look for the trends and see what has been successful across the world. Now with added Non Aligned.

Centaurs

| Agenda | Wins |
|------------------------|------|
| Rise of the Republic | 210 |
| Growth in Chaos | 122 |
| Forced Evolution | 54 |
| Knowledge is Power | 37 |
| Infiltrate and Exploit | 16 |
| Support of the Mighty | 9 |
| Order Above All | 7 |
| Higher Calling | 7 |
| Seizing Advantage | 5 |
| Defense in Depth | 5 |

Human

| Agenda | Wins |
|-----------------------|------|
| Alliance of Races | 99 |
| Forced Evolution | 53 |
| Support of the Mighty | 29 |
| Seizing Advantage | 24 |
| Higher Calling | 22 |
| Order Above All | 22 |
| Power Politics | 16 |
| Knowledge is Power | 14 |
| Peace in our Time | 13 |
| none | 12 |

Minbari

| Agenda | Wins |
|-----------------------|------|
| Support of the Mighty | 110 |
| Order Above All | 74 |
| Servants of Order | 51 |
| Power Politics | 34 |
| War Footing | 34 |
| none | 23 |
| Finish the War | 20 |
| Forced Evolution | 14 |
| Build Infrastructure | 10 |
| The Hope of Peace | 9 |

Narn

| Agenda | Wins |
|-----------------------|------|
| Revenge | 223 |
| Never Again | 103 |
| Seizing Advantage | 21 |
| None | 18 |
| Maintain the Peace | 13 |
| Full Mobilization | 12 |
| Power Politics | 10 |
| Order Above All | 10 |
| Forced Evolution | 9 |
| Support of the Mighty | 7 |

Non Aligned

| Agenda | Wins |
|----------------------|------|
| Chosen of God | 129 |
| Fulcrum of Power | 19 |
| Peaceful Unification | 17 |
| Peace in our Time | 7 |
| Safety in Numbers | 6 |
| None | 5 |
| Defense in Depth | 4 |
| War Footing | 4 |
| Forced Evolution | 4 |
| Power Politics | 3 |