

# BLACK ΩMEGA SQUADRON

## B5CCG UK NEWSLETTER

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

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## Golden Daze!

*Gencon sweep by Bristol Maestro*

Stephen Gold achieved the virtually-impossible at GenCon UK this year, by snatching not only the UK National title, but also the Black Omega championship. He managed to beat the strongest field of UK B5 talent ever assembled **twice** to become the undisputed B5 champion in the UK. This amazing feat rounded off a truly memorable weekend in Loughborough, immortalised by the unseasonably blistering weather and the huge turnouts for all the tournaments.

There were two other winners during the convention - Ian Richards won the *Battle for Earth* tournament, and Richard Willis won the Sealed Deck.

For more GenCon coverage, see overleaf...

## Franz Rules!

*German qualifier takes World crown.*

Martin Franz battled his way through the qualifiers to win the second B5CCG World Championship in Aachen, Germany. He won this HUGE tournament with a Human deck (reproduced this issue) but the unique format, which meant that players rotated decks between rounds, meant that he was tested to the limit. The tournament had participants from all over the world, and has been lauded as a success by many involved. Top placing UK players were Paul Sheward (5<sup>th</sup>) and Stephen Gold (6<sup>th</sup>) The final placings were...

Martin Franz (Ger)	21 Pow	Human(Sinclair)
Marco Schuetz (Ger)	20 Pow	Narn
Michael Brand (Ger)	18 Pow	Minbari
Peter Ender (Ger)	17 Pow	Centauri
Paul Sheward (UK)	15 Pow	NA (Vizak)

## A League of Your Own?

*Welsh experiment sweeps country*

Following the runaway success of the Wales/South league that Ranger Bruce Mason has been running for the last few months, the idea has been expanded on a national scale. Starting on the 15<sup>th</sup> November, a number of leagues will begin across the country, as well as a new season for the Welsh league.

There have also been rumours that there will be an event at Triples 2000 for the League winners; although nothing has been confirmed.

At time of writing, there were three confirmed leagues - Wales/Bristol/Reading, Newcastle/Leeds and Milton Keynes/Midlands. If you want to know more about your local league, contact the Ranger for that area and they will give you the low-down on the events.

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



Hello once more and welcome to what could well be the final comment of this type forever. Basically it's all change at Precedence, which means that there are some knock on effects over here. I am not sure how much I am allowed to say, but that has never stopped me before...

The UK becomes an autonomous region! We get to control ourselves, becoming more official. In fact Black Omega becomes the identity for Precedence in the UK and Ireland. That means that we can recruit rangers, raiders and warders on the spot, and generally have the control that we badly needed.

The Black Omega Squadron newsletter becomes bigger and better. We include coverage on the other games, in the form of an insert that Precedence sends to us. What's more, all the mailings for Zeta and the like will come from us. So, existing and new Zeta members get Black Omega Legends delivered to the door and with extra stuff. All this new found independence means that we can take the games where you want them to go. We can do whatever the people want. This new status reflects the hard work that everyone has put in, including all the rangers, the staff that write the newsletter, the people behind the scenes that book the shows and take care of the finances, and you the players.

So that's it for Black Omega Squadron in 1999. See you all next ... millennium .. With the new look Black Omega Legends and all the usual stuff.

Take Care  
Phil Nicholls

## ISN News

Ω It's official! The UK Team Championships will be happening again at Triples 2000. This year we will have an increased capacity for more teams and maybe even some European competitors. Interested in the toughest B5 challenge? Grab a Ranger to find out more!

Ω New Promos have been announced - **Psi Spies** (the last Psi Corps promo) will be a mail-in from the NEXT B5 novel, not the last Bester one as advertised. **Brevari!** will be in the Nov/Dec issue of Scrye. **Taree** will be the box promo for Severed Dreams and **Flarn** will be the box promo for Wheel of Fire. **Jane** was to be a mail-in from the Sierra B5 computer game, but now will be a signed card. **Dodger** will appear in Inquest. **Secrets of Success** will replace For the Future as a tournament prize.

Ω There will be three more expansions after Severed Dreams - Wheel of Fire, Crusade and Anla'shok.

## BLACK OMEGA SQUADRON COMPETITION

To celebrate the final issue of Black Omega Squadron before we have our massive upgrade for the New Year, we have decided to run our first ever competition! All we want you to do is send in your suggestions about what you want to see covered in the newsletter for the next year. Everyone who sends into a suggestion will be entered into a draw and the winner will receive a bundle of **PROMO** cards! What could be simpler? Send your entries to [neil.gow@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:neil.gow@newcastle.ac.uk) OR post them to Black Omega, c/o 6 Tennyson Terrace, North Shields, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE29 6LW. Closing date for entries will be 01/01/2000.

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# Words of Gold

*We interview that man with the name made for puns.*

**Black Omega** - Did you enjoy Gencon?

**Gold** - Silly question! Of course I did! Quite apart from the B5 tournaments, we also had fun playing Krash (with the cars), which I won by being a back-stabbing swine and attacking everyone's cars from behind! The Seven Seas demo tournament was also fun

**Black Omega** - Lets look at the UK Championships first? How did you rate your prospects at the start of the day?

**Gold** - I was hoping to get into the final, but I never even dared to hope to win!

**Black Omega** - Anyone there you reckoned to be a front runner?

**Gold** - Hmm, I thought that one of the Welsh mob would have a good chance of winning, but its difficult to say who was a front runner

**Black Omega** - How did the preliminaries run? How did you handle the heat (literal and metaphorical)?

**Gold** - I think the best way I can describe the preliminaries was "surprise". I REALLY did not expect to win EVERY game! It was actually a lot worse after I had won the first two games, since then I knew that if I did well in the 3rd game I would be in the final. The heat was also a nightmare!

**Black Omega** - The final looked very intense. How was it for you?

**Gold** - Not that bad actually. Since I had been in the Pan-European final last year, I was no-where near as nervous as I should have been. I suppose that I was so glad to actually get into the final I was not thinking about winning. But when the end of the game neared and I was joint 1st with Ian, it was REALLY intense. When I suddenly realised (and it was not planned I assure you) that I could win in the Impasse round my hands started shaking! It was really difficult not to burst out with a BIG smile at the beginning of the last round!

**Black Omega** - Your final play - a Diplomatic Intrusion during an Impasse - was a shock to everyone one. Take us through that play? Were you sure of the ruling before you played the card?

**Gold** - Nope, it was a shock to me too. I had put the card into my deck that morning as an experiment, thinking that I might use it to cancel someone's agenda for a turn, but playing it in the Impasse round meant that no-one could do anything about it!! I was pretty sure about the card text, since it made it clear that the agenda was blanked for a turn regardless of whether the conflict won or lost, but when Ian asked for a ruling I was suddenly terrified that there was some sort of text change that I did not know about! Turned out OK in the end though . . .

**Black Omega** - How was that night? What did you do?

**Gold** - Went to the bar with everyone, and got sloshed! I did turn down the Rocky Horror, since I was basically falling over and wanted to get to bed!

**Black Omega** - The Black Omega Championships was a less stressful affair. How did you view the tournament?

**Gold** - It was a LOT less stressful for me, since I know that I already a place in the worlds final. I was expected to be SEVERELY picked on that day, so I was really playing for fun. Also, Phil kindly pointed me out to everyone at the beginning of the day, so I thought I was sunk! And to add insult to injury, I was playing my third-choice deck, the Non-Aligned. This was only the second time I had played Non-Aligned in my life, and I had only put that deck together the night before (I had to go out and buy a couple of Non-Aligned starter decks at 9.00am to finish it!)

**Black Omega** - At one time there was the all-to-real prospect of a ten-player final - any thoughts?

**Gold** - Well, both Mike and myself had already agreed with Bruce that we would both step down from the final if Paul had the same score as us (three in-time wins). But then Paul managed to muck up the final game, so we both decided to play. After all, we were both through to the worlds final, so it did not matter so much that we were playing the same race. I have to admit that I was a lot more interested in playing when we found out what the prize was!

**Black Omega** - The final on the day was an awesome array of current and former champions - how did you rate your chances?

**Gold** - I have to admit, I did not think there was a chance in hell of winning, given the players in that final! Add to that the fact that Mike was also playing Non-Aligned. So I just went into the final to have a fun game . . .

**Black Omega** - How did it feel when you realised you'd won again?

**Gold** - Embarrassed actually!

# Tricks of the Trade

*UK No#1 Andrew Watson gives his personal lessons from GenCon*

GenCon has some and gone and we have seen some of the best B5 players in the country competing at the highest level. When the competition gets that intense you are sure to see some new game plays so here are my top five hints and tips from GenCon.

1. Manipulating other players is a major part of the game but don't overdo it or you will alienate everyone else and get picked on yourself.
2. Hidden Treasury is broken! Use it with influence gaining events like Short Term Goals and Exploration, and you don't care if it gets hit with Not Meant To Be (NMTB). For maximum effect, NMTB your opponents NMTB for even more influence!
3. If you're not very well known in the game ( *i.e. You haven't been singled out in an article by a vindictive editor - Neil* ), sitting back and just being quiet can be far more effective for you than trying to manipulate everyone. Just let them think that you aren't a threat while quietly winning the game.
4. Don't lie to other players as it just gets you hit! Twisting the meaning of the words and sticking to the absolute letter of what you say is however perfectly acceptable and expected.
5. Impasse is obscene! Use Prey on the Weak with Hidden Treasury and Homeworld during the Impasse turn for a free 2 influence. Euphrates Treaty works well too providing you remember to target the other player...

However, what was perhaps the star play of the whole weekend happened in the final of the Nationals. The Humans and the Narn were tied on power with the Humans having Support of the Mighty out. WANI had died the previous turn and an Impasse had gone off. During the Impasse turn the Narn used Diplomatic Intrusion to blank the Support of the Mighty and try to win the match. After much reading of the card and discussion with the nearest Rangers it was decided that it did work and the Narn took the title. Everyone learned something that day.

## Tournaments - Nov & Dec '99 Plus Demonstrations too!

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

06/11/99	Area 51, Manchester Lisa Abbott/Andrew Sims, <i>Constructed</i>
13/11/99	Waylands Forge, Birmingham Chris Slinn, <i>Constructed</i>
14/11/99	Fanboy Comics, Milton Keynes Martyn Ransom, <i>Constructed</i>
20/11/99	Lears Bargain Books, Newport Richard Willis, <i>Constructed</i>
20/11/99	Wargames Emporium, Sheffield Chris Hayes, <i>Constructed</i>
21/11/99	McNultys Internet Café, Newcastle Neil Gow, <i>Constructed</i>
28/11/99	Felon and Firkin, Leeds Andrew Sims, <i>Constructed</i>
04/12/99	Area 51, Manchester Lisa Abbott/Andrew Sims, <i>Constructed</i>
19/12/99	McNultys Internet Café, Newcastle Neil Gow, <i>Constructed</i>

ΩEvery Wednesday there are demos at the following venues..  
Offworld Collectibles, Chatham, Kent - Bruce Chadwick  
Comics Plus, Aldershot, Hants - Steve Smith  
Every first Saturday of the month, there are demos at  
Antics, Plymouth - Damien Ashton  
Every third Saturday of the month, there are demos at  
Cardiff Games, Cardiff - Bruce Mason

# What do you Want Cards?

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## **The World Championship Winning Deck!**

Played by Martin Franz, this deck also won the German Championships for Peter Ender.

**Characters** - Jeffrey Sinclair, Susan Ivanova, Commander Ivanova, Frederick Lantz x2, John Sheridan, Luis Santiago x2, Miagi Hidoshi x2, Senator Voudreau x2.

**Conflicts** - Affirmation of Power x3, Impasse x3, Officer Exchange x3, Rally the People, Test Their Mettle x3

**Fleets** - Babylon5 Fighters x2, Command Ship x2, Fleet of the Line

**Locations** - Earth x3, Military Outpost x2

**Events** - Rapid Growth, Conscription x3, Glitch, Insufficient Support x3, Meditation x3, Not Meant to Be x3, Short Term Goals x3

**Contingencies** - Further Gains x3, Hidden Treasury x3

**Enhancements** - We are not Impressed x3

**Agenda** - A Rising Power

**Starting Hand** - Jeffrey Sinclair, Susan Ivanova, A Rising Power, Rapid Growth.

# If I ruled the World?

*Black Omega talks to Martin Franz, the new world champion, about the tournament, the game and a load of other random stuff!*

**Black Omega** - So how does it feel to be World Champion?

**Martin** - Extremely happy and very very lucky.

**Black Omega** - How did you qualify for the finals?

**Martin** - I wasn't qualified for the finals before Saturday. I played Narn, my third race choice, in the invitational and won my first two rounds. In the third round I made a big mistake and came only second. Lucky for me that the other Narn didn't do so well (Unlike most other tournaments). I was first Narn and qualified. Without the mistake I may have won the invitational as well ;-)

**Black Omega** - How did you find the Worlds? Was it a good atmosphere to play in?

**Martin** - Most players I played with were very nice and much fun to play with. The atmosphere was great, but I was a nervous wreck almost all the time. I found the tournament format (playing 3 different races) a little bit chaotic.

**Black Omega** - How did you feel when you realised you were going to win? Take us through those last plays.

**Martin** - I knew that I had a chance to win at the final round of the tournament. The Narn was very close behind. Both he and I would have gone to 21 Power at the end of the round if both our conflicts were successful. So I had to make sure I won my conflict and got more Power than the Narn. My first shot was the Short Term Goals, but that Influence was stolen by Liberating Resources. By then the only player left with enough power to counter my Glitch on the Commerce Raiding was the Centauri. Luckily he had none left in his hand and I stole the Narn one Power so that I could score the victory.

**Black Omega** - What were the prizes?

**Martin** - A lot. I got the blueprint sheets for the upcoming B5 expansion, a Defector Revealed (signed and embossed), one Surprise, One Lyta Empowered (signed and embossed), one Prime Minister (signed and embossed), a nearly complete set of Promo cards and a bunch of boosters.

**Black Omega** - What is your favourite faction? What's your favourite card?

**Martin** - Most of the time I end up playing Narn in the tournaments, but in social play I like to play the Psi Corps. One of my favourite cards is "Taunts and Games". Not only because it's useful in a tournament but it's a fun idea, too :)

**Black Omega** - You are a Ranger too. How do you balance running games and playing them?

**Martin** - I only play at mayor events such as the German championship or the world championship (if it is not my turn to judge them).

**Black Omega** - There has been a lot of talk on-line recently about the way competitive play is moving - i.e. 'one-air' decks. What do you think about the state of the game at the moment?

**Martin** - 1AIR decks are definitely the strongest at the moment. Besides Shadow Mark decks or B5 decks maybe. And I don't think that this will change much in the upcoming expansions. But I don't think that is much important. Even with the best 1AIR deck you still need to make friends and deals at the table...

**Black Omega** - So any chance of you bringing a German/European team across in March for the Team Championships?

**Martin** - You still have to send me the details when and where the Team Championship is held and how the rules are. But I think I can get some of my players to participate. I think you will see a team with the first three ranked players from the world championship in it. That would be fun ;-)

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## The Non-Aligned aren't dead - they're only (un)resting!

Characters - Juphar Trkider, Vizak, Fashar, Milashi Voktal, Kalika Qwal'mizra, Suarez Cil'tlakh, Hyach Matriarch, Dagool, Lhim/Dram x3, Non-Aligned Aide x3, Mary-Ann Cramer x2

Conflicts - Impasse x3, Alliance x3, Non-Aggression Pact x2, Defense Treaty x2, Buy Favor x2, Diplomatic Intrusion.

Events - Not Our Concern x3, My Hands are Tied x3, Internal Strife x3, Political Realignment x3, Mass Rioting x3, Not Meant to Be x3, Taunts and Games x2, Subliminal Influence, Burnt From Both Ends, Different Perspectives x2, You Didn't Mean That x2.

Enhancements - Independent Support, Commerce Raiding, Guerillas, Held Back x2

Fleets - Combined Fleet x3, Brakiri Cruisers x2

Aftermaths - Public Outcry x3

Groups - Saboteurs

Contingencies - Hidden Treasury x2

Locations - Zhabar

Agendas - Fulcrum of Power, Peaceful Unification x2

Starting hand of Vizak, Fashar, Jupher, BFBes and FoP allows you to perform a lightning quick start. The point of the deck is to build a massive defense and then force through Alliances whilst dropping influence strategically with Mass Rioting. There are loads of tricks - NA Pact, Saboteurs and Combined Fleets close out a military threat, and judicious use of Not Our Concern can allow you to select someone to lose a Prey on the Weak. When your time comes, you can lock out a couple of players with NOC and MHAT, allowing a win with your Aides. Lowering tensions makes YDMT as effective as YANR. Suarez can cause chaos with the proliferation of groups and Held Back can lock down some decks. This isn't an easy deck to play and is extremely defensive - more like a mono-blue permission deck from Magic. It is very interactive however - much fun is had threatening people with Mass Rioting. There is life for the Non-aligned beyond Chosen of God!

# UK RANKINGS

Rank	Name	Prev
1.	Andrew Watson	1 (-)
2.	Paul James Whitehouse	8 (+6)
3.	Craig Harris	12 (+9)
4.	Ty Grover-Jones	3 (-1)
5.	Mike Pemberthy	7 (+2)
6.	Nic Anderson	2 (-4)
7.	Chris Slinn	14 (+7)
8.	Hayden Gittens	9 (+1)
9.	Mark Lancaster	6 (-3)
10.	John McCann	(new)
11.	Paul Sheward	13 (+2)
12.	Jon Noakes	27 (+15)
13.	Dave Bailey	16 (+3)
14.	Cliff Jenner	20 (+6)
15.	Ian Richards	18 (+3)
16.	Ralph Holland	10 (-6)
17.	Peter Meredith	(new)
18.	Jo Tripp	24 (+6)
19.	James Blagden	21 (+2)
20.	Richard James	28 (+8)
21.	James West	(new)
22.	Dave Woods	36 (+14)
23.	Mark Lawrence	15 (-8)
24.	Gordon Skelley	37 (+13)
25.	Stephen Gold	32 (+7)
26.	John Allen	23 (-3)
27.	John Wilson	33 (+6)
28.	Giles Lewis	29 (+1)
29.	Mark Boulter	38 (+9)
30.	Roger Hart	31 (+1)

(Criteria - games played for the six month period between 01/04/99 and 30/09/99, 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. This table does not include results from GenCon 99. Ranking system maintained by Carl Skeen.)

## Welsh League Results

### Who is the First One?

The inaugural Wales/South league was won by top Human player **Ian Richards**, piping the 1998 UK Champion Mike Penberthy into second place.

Name	PI	Points
1 Ian Richards	35	150
2 Mike Penberthy	16	149
3 Ty Grover-Jones	46	146
4 James Blagden	20	144
5 Richie Willis	47	140

**NEXT ISSUE** - Grey Council returns with a look at Severed Dreams - what's hot and what's grot. We'll also have articles on Battle for Earth and all the usual stuff. Is there anything you want to see in Black Omega Squadron? You could always drop me a line???