



Amazon Playbook

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Overview

Amazon's are probably the most disliked team in Bloodbowl. Haters will cite their poor "cookie cutter" design, easy universal access to the best skill combo in the game (blodge) and that supposedly playing games against them is like "paper, scissors, stone" (insert your home country's equivalent game here...) in that they "always" win against some teams and "always" lose against others and that their only advantage in the game is negated by another skill. But their main reason is that the haters probably lose to them more often than they think they should.

Every coin has its flipside, as every Bloodbowl team has its weaknesses. Let us look at the lesser aspects of Amazons: Low AV, average MA, AG and ST. No player is faster than MA6, no player has an AG or ST of more than 3 (indeed the only team in all of Bloodbowl where this is so). The "cookie cutter" stat of all their players is 6337, **completely average**. Indeed the uniformity of their statline is what makes them so unique!

Now they are much more than a team of hobgoblins for one reason. **Universal dodge**. This gives them a pretty unique playstyle too. They lack the agility of elves to dance around other players, but the whole team can dodge reasonably well and keep up with each other and this gives them options other teams don't really have (at least until well advanced).

Team Playstyle

Looking at the players the Amazons have, one might possibly be forgiven for thinking that they are a passing team, they have throwers, catchers, all their players can dodge so are reasonably mobile, they are low ST and AV..... But this would be wrong, **wrong, WRONG!**

Amazons lack the agility and speed of the elven (and Skaven) teams who can easily score by flooding the opponents half with players, having a thrower chuck a long pass for a receiver to easily catch and then scamper into the endzone. Humans can also do this much better than the 'Zons as they are so much faster. The MA of 6 and AG of 3 precludes the passing game as a high percentage play and as such shouldn't be attempted unless absolutely necessary.

What the Amazons are good at is caging running style. They are not an out and out bash team by any stretch of the imagination, they lack the punch of a rostered Big Guy, have no players of above average strength and have weak armour, so they won't win a straight-up fist fight with many teams. What they do have is Dodge and this will keep them on their feet against players who don't have tackle (most rookie teams). This means that if the oppo follows up (which he is likely to do given that he will like his odds against such a weak looking player) you will get to block him next turn. Often you will need to bring up an assist for the 2d, but with easy access to guard and with a bit of thought put into the blocking sequence, that shouldn't be too difficult. Dodge also allows them to disengage from their opponents to reset the cage somewhere else should things get too hot.*

* Elf teams can play this way when more advanced, but they will lack skill and team rerolls to begin with for any failed dodges, so it can soon go wrong. Undead (Original and Necromantic) and Lizardmen can also do this, but it would mean their vital but fragile ghouls and skinks would get separated from the strength and staying power of the rest of the team and this could prove costly over the course of a game.

The Players:



Linewomen: 0-16 6337, Dodge G/SAP 50k

Cheap and cheerful, but not to be underestimated. Dodge is a great starting skill as most other rookie players don't come with block, so will be looking for a POW to get them down.

Skills: The first skill for most linewomen should be Wrestle. This means that they can only be Knocked Down on a POW (without the opo having Tackle), so should keep them on the pitch. Wrestle also allows them to more easily knock holes in an opponent's defensive line (when they have block) so they can better run a cage through the hole.

Secondary skills should be Fend, Tackle or maybe Dirty Player depending on what the rest of the league is composed of (Fend to prevent hurt if in a bashy league, Tackle to take down dodgers in an agile league and Dirty Player to put the hurt on the opposition- what could be "better" than a dirty girl wrestling you down, only to stand up and kick you in the balls next turn!)

An early skill-up should probably be Kick. Although 'Zons lack the speed to really take advantage of a Blitz! result on the Kick-Off, with a few dodges they can make life a lot more difficult for the other team. Kick is also very good against slow, bashy teams.

Double rolls should almost always be Guard. If this is the first skill-up, then go for Block rather than Wrestle later on. Secondary doubles, Side-Step. I would probably make an exception with Sneaky Git for a Dirty Player, as much for fluff as effectiveness. Mighty Blow would also be an option depending on how many other guarders you have and what other teams you would likely face.

Stat Increases: Take all. Linewomen are pretty much the only players on a 'Zon team where I would consider AV > MA and only then if their main job is LOS duty, but on a double 5, I would take Guard over the MA or AV.

Linewomen, especially those on the LOS probably won't last too long, so if they get to two skills, be happy.

Catchers: 0-2 6337, Dodge, Catch GA/SP 70k

Ok they have Catch, but aren't any faster than Linewomen and there are only two of them, so this further precludes the passing game. What they do have is access to agility skills and this is what makes them well worth buying.

Skills: The initial skills picked should be Block or Side-Step and then the other. Block to aid their survivability, Side-Step to make them annoying. There are few things more annoying in Bloodbowl than a Blodge side-stepper (we will see some below though).

After Block and Side-Step, Diving Tackle is fantastic. There are very few things more annoying in Bloodbowl than a Blodge, side-stepping diving tackler...

If (and it's a big if) you get to four skills then you have a few choices. Tackle combines well with Diving Tackle, Frenzy combines well with Side-Step, Jump-Up adds much needed speed to the team, Fend helps survivability...I'm sure there are others you could choose.

The new rules for Diving Catch make it an intriguing possibility. It gives a much easier catch option when an accurate pass is thrown (a 2+, rerolled catch). This shouldn't encourage one to play the throwing game, but it will help to skill up rookie MVP players when they get a completion and will of course help when you need to throw the ball.

Double skill picks should again be Guard. There are very few things more annoying in Bloodbowl than a Blodge, side-stepping guarder...

Stat Increases: As for Linewomen, take all. MA rather than AV. Depending on how the rest of the team had developed, I might possibly take Guard over the MA on a 5+5.

Throwers: 0-2 6337, Dodge, Pass GP/SA 70k

A pretty marginal player to begin with (you're not playing the passing game now are you!?). But they are worth getting. Having the Pass skill at least gives you more options should things go wrong with the cage.

Skills: Your first Thrower should probably be developed as a ball carrying Thrower, so Block, Sure Hands (not absolutely necessary in my opinion, unless there are strip-ballers in the league) and Leader. Now I don't think Sure Hands is necessary because an Amazon team should have a lot of rerolls, even more so if they develop an early Leader.

Later skills could be Accurate, Kick-Off Return, Fend, even Tackle if you use her as a safety. Doubles would probably be Sure Feet, or Guard if I felt my team needed more.

Despite all I have said about not playing the passing game, I do think it is worth developing a Thrower as a proper Thrower. So Accurate, Safe Throw, Strong Arm on doubles etc. There are three main reasons for this. Firstly, sometimes you will have to score quickly, if you've only 2 turns to score, then you have to try to score in two turns! It is perfectly possible, but shouldn't be your default play. Secondly, it will keep your options open and will make your opponent think twice about his defence and what you are going to do (more on this later). Thirdly, you might need to get the ball quickly into a cage from a deep kick.

Stat Increases: As for Linewomen, take all. MA rather than AV, possibly not ST4 on the dedicated Thrower (depending on how many skills she had). Possibly Strong Arm over MA for the dedicated Thrower.

Blitzers: 0-4 6337, Dodge, Block GS/AP 90k

Saving the best 'till last, they start with the magical Block and Dodge combination **and** have access to Strength skills. The work horses of your team and the reason why Amazons are so good at low TVs-few teams have the ability to take down a blodger, indeed only they and the best player in the game** start with this great combo. Maybe a bit overpriced given their mediocre stats, but you should always try to have all 4 of them.

Skills: Guard first, for at least the first three blitzer skill-ups. Then probably Stand Firm to shore up at least two corners of your cage and to stop you from being pushed around. Mighty Blow is also a good second skill as it aids SPP accumulation, but I'd generally want a couple of Stand Firm guarders first, as it is a very effective combination. If your team needs it, then some Tackle could be a choice after Guard.

You might want to make the 4th Blitzer into a killer, so go for Mighty Blow first, then Tackle/Piling On/Frenzy/Juggernaut as the league warrants. If you get to a forth skill, then some Grab might be interesting, but assuming no doubles, a Blodge, Guard, Stand Firm, Mighty Blow, Tackle Blitzer would be sweet.

** The Woodelf Wardancer

A great advantage of the Amazons is that they do not even have to think about using a double on Dodge as most other Blitzers would (admittedly all other Blitzers are faster than the linemen on their team, but hey ho). Therefore, that gives you the option of getting some tasty Agility skills, which combined with Strength access is a real boon. I go for Side-Step first (obviously not if you already have Stand Firm) because.....there are very few things more annoying in Bloodbowl than a Blodge, side-stepping guarder...

Diving Tackle could be an option, as could Jump Up, especially on a Piling-On Blitzer. You might even want to get Sure Feet if your team needed some more speed.

Stat Increases: Take all and be thankful. I don't think a double 5 is worth getting a double skill for. You might want to get the AV rather than the MA on a well developed player for some added protection, especially if they are in the mix a lot, but I don't think I would.

Of course all you skill picks will be somewhat influenced by the league you play in and what team you are about to face next. If you're up against some Woodies next with a Strip Ball Wardancer, give a Blitzer Sure Hands for protection. If you'll up against a stunty team next, get some Tackle *etc, etc, etc...*



Starting Rosters

This is the 3rd great strength of the Amazon team (after universal dodge and their Blitzers). 'Zons are cheap, with cheap rerolls.

The only thing you need to know about starting rosters is to start with 4 Blitzers. In fact, you can have all the positionals and 4 rerolls in a starting roster. But I think it is better to start with 12 players, you are AV 7 after all and it helps to keep to keep 11 on the pitch-once you become down on players, you are more likely to lose more players as you get ganged up on.

Four rerolls is probably also enough, it is far more than what most other teams will start with and you may as well fill yer boots whilst they are cheap as you will want them, especially later on when other teams have Tackle to negate your Dodge.

You might not want to start with an APO (but it is easy enough to do so), but he should be your first purchase.

Optimal Roster

All positionals and 14-15 players. Given their cheapness and squishiness, it is quite likely you'll be the underdog and will want to save a space for a Star Player. 5-6 rerolls.



Tactics

Well, caging obviously. But where you differ from normal is that if you fail to go through, you can go round via the use of the dodge skill. It is also helpful here to advance a couple of players on a few squares on so that slower teams can't get round these players to reposition themselves very easily in front of you. Then advance your cage quickly and hole up near the endzone to "manage the clock".

It is also useful to have an advance player or two which you can threaten to throw/hand off to. This does two things. It either forces your opo to split his defence to deal with the threat, thus weakening the defence against the cage (the desired result), or if he doesn't deal with it, you've got an easy way through to score, so should take it if it is the best option (this is why it is good to have the thrower in the cage). It is always better to have a score on the board than not, you just don't want to score too quickly against the harder (and generally slower) as they will have more time to score against you.

The 2-1 grind is what you want to do against elves and teams with a good 2-turn score option. Against harder teams you might have to score in turn 5-6 as they have put so much pressure on your cage, you've been forced to score. Often this happens when your girls have been forced to do a half cage against the side-line and it is either score, or be turned over-it is obviously better to score.

Leaving the opposition with 4-5 turns to grind against you isn't too bad. You are good defensively (especially at low TVs) as are difficult to knock down and with only 4-5 turns, they will be put out of their comfort zone, will have to speed up a bit and this may leave gaps which you can exploit, get the turnover and score.

Play only in short leagues....

There is a major failing with Amazons, their longevity. They are great at low TVs, but as other teams get more advanced, more reliable and more able to smack them around, their low AV will start to hurt. Up to about TV 150-175, they rock, but then their very average statline and lack of staying power start to hurt and it will become a lot tougher winning.

To be able to compete at higher TVs, you will probably need a bit of luck in staying alive and a lot of luck in roiling stat increases. New skills like Fend should also help stave off casualties, so that should be of help in the CRP rules.

A rookie 'Zon team should beat a rookie Chaos team, but a TV 200 Chaos team will generally smash an Amazon team apart. So whilst the haters complain about 'Zons being too good, this is only really at the start, other teams catch up then overtake them in time. Nobody complains about Chaos of Nurgle being too good now do they, but they are awesome at high TVs?

Don't play Dwarves....

This is another fallacy about Amazons in my opinion-that they always lose to Dwarves, paper, scissors, stone, blah, blah, blah. Yes a lot (but not all) of Dwarves start with Tackle, but they are sloooowww-here you MA of 6 is positively rapid! Use it! Pull them one way, then the next, then burst through and they won't be able to catch you to stop you scoring. You should also have a few players with block and guard, so at least to begin with they won't out-muscle you and on a bothdown result you will still be on your feet.

You will probably also have a lot of rerolls, so if Tackle denies a Dodge reroll, then you can still use a Team reroll. At least a draw should be attainable unless you lose too many players, but then that is the same with all games.

Obviously if you play Dwarves all the time, attrition will take its toll, but a few games a season should be manageable.

Inducements

Often Amazons will be the underdogs, so you should get to pick a fair few inducements.

Given your low AV, Bloodweiser Babes/Blokes(!?) are a good deal, as are induced APOs should you be up against a killer team and have some spare gold to spend.

Wizards are always good, especially against caging teams. Your team should have enough skill rerolls to be able to get the ball away with a bit of luck once the cage has been busted if you have the right player in the right place. (This is another reason for having those throwers and catchers – a pass and catch skill reroll here could be vital)

Amazons also benefit from good Star Players. Bertha Bigfist adds some much needed muscle and Dodge and Break Tackle gives you a nice cage breaking option. Just be aware that she is a Loner.

Willow Rosebark is a good option, if only to be LOS fodder, she's cheap and reasonably tough. She is also ST4 and has Dauntless, so if you're struggling against the Big Guys, then with an assist, she should manage a 2d block on them.

Zara is good against Undead (take out those blodge ghouls!) and other teams with low AV/blodgers with her stakes. She is also ST4 and has Block and Dauntless, so again with an assist can take down stronger opponents.

Roxanna Darknail is a good option against elves and other quick teams. She adds some much needed speed and is AG 5 so gives you 2+ Leaps, nice! Leap and Frenzy can make for some unsuspecting crowdsurfs... I think she is a bit fragile to take against the harder teams as she is reasonably easy to take out if caught.

Helmut Wolf's chainsaw comes in handy against low AV and blodge teams and with a bribe or two, you might be able to keep him on for the whole game. He isn't that hard though (no block, ST3) so you'll need to keep him protected if you want to keep him on the pitch. As with all chainsaws, his effect can be hugely beneficial, middling or damaging. He can kickback first turn of the game, fail his loner roll and kill himself, but he can also take out your opo's star Wardancers with luck...

Morg, is well Morg. Expensive. Only if you are a huge underdog.

I take Star Player in preference to Mercenaries as I think they are a better deal. The 30k premium for a Merc is at least 1/3 of the base cost. Having said that, if you are a blitzer down, hiring a guard or tackle Merc against certain opponents could be worth it. Take note though, a Merc Lino with a skill is 130k-you could get Willow or Helmut for about that price.

I'm not really a fan of the cards in preference to Star Players as they are soooo random. Some are well worth their cost, some are a complete waste. If you've loads of inducement money, or are in a Cup semi/final then you might have to take them. I find a few lower cost cards are more likely to give you a good one rather than trying for one of the more expensive ones.

Summary

- Amazon teams are like butterflies, they are beautiful but short lived.
- Ignore the haters.***
- Enjoy the ride whilst it lasts.****

***Unless they play stunties, then their opinion is worthless (and if they do play stunties, they are probably good enough sports to not worry about which teams are good or not-they wouldn't be playing stunties in the first place!).

**** And don't be afraid to drop in any pun, double entendre or dirty joke, they're an all female team, it's Bloodbowl, it should be fun