

Bretonnian Playbook: Questing for the Cup

Why you should play Bretonnians:

Do you like the idea of your opponent moaning about how annoying your team is? Do you like to disrupt the “normal” game strategies? Do you want a challenge? Do you like to min/max teams? Then Bretonnians are for you!

Why you shouldn't play Bretonnians:

Playing Bretonnians a good knowledge of positioning- with it they are quite strong, without it they struggle. Winning with moderate stats is not easy: No strong players, fragile linemen and just AG3 for ball handling - all of which can be frustrating.

Disclaimer : This guide is for long term team building and is best used in a perpetual environment.

The team concept :

At first when i played Bretonnian, both before and after the buff, i thought : Oh my god, they suck at everything. One night though, i theorycrafted a build and put it in practice. And you know what? I think i finally, and humbly, found a way for them to shine. But first, a word on skill distribution: You need more skills and more evenly shared than most of the teams to be successful. Around 1500 tv, you should have most blockers level 3, blitzers level 4 or 5 and a few linemen level 2.

Without any exceptional stats, you really need to get the most out of your starting skills.

Blockers are ST3 with wrestle, meaning you can't reliably win by outbashing your opponent.

Blitzers are MA7 and AG3, meaning you can't rely on elf bullshit nor on outrunning your opponents. So, what do they have?! They have Fend, and a lot of it! They also have access to every skills trees, except mutations.

Which brings me back to my theorycrafted build: With Fend (and Wrestle and Block) the strength of this team is, they can control space on the pitch like no other team can. What does it mean? Play on their strength, and build your players accordingly. Putting Stand Firm, Side Step or Fend on everyone on the pitch will play with your opponent's head, forcing him to abandon his usual strategy.

On offence, it's less noticeable. You will appreciate the Fend screen and Stand Firm cage corners for sure, but they will most likely be played like Dark elf, mixing screens and cages to zig zag your way up the pitch. On defence though, they truly shine. Watch the orcs struggling to go past the line of scrimmage and the elves having a hard time shoving your Stand Firm/Guard out of the way, only to be knocked down by your knights when they succeed.

The Players

The Blitzers: 7/3/3/8 110k 0-4 Block, Dauntless, Catch
GAP Normal, S Double

These are your best, and most expensive, players. You'll need at least one specialized in running with the ball, used as ball retriever on defense. The other should be your main blitzer. Due to their high cost, i usually play with only 2 blitzers until 1300-1500 TV. When playing at mid/high TV, a vanilla blitzer doesn't shine much, and you're giving at least 5 skills to your opponent for him. So, until your blockers are all level 3 and your two blitzers level 3-5, i wouldn't bother with a third one. More blitzers on the pitch also mean less Peasants, so less meatbags to protect your really useful players or screen your way. When your team become developed, hire the third one. When he got a few level, you can think about hiring the fourth.

The runner build :

Skills : Dodge, Sure Hands, Side Step, Fend/Sure Feet/Diving Tackle
Double : Skip or Guard

You absolutely need a runner. Brets can't rely much on passing play, so he is gonna grab the ball in your half, and if all goes right, then he should be the one to score. After the 3 first skills, i suggest going for Diving Tackle to give him more use in defence. You could skip double, or give him Guard to help defending. Use him wisely if you go that way though, don't let him finish a turn in a tackle zone because he's precious.

The blitzer build :

Skills : Dodge, Tackle, Strip ball/Sidestep/ Diving Tackle/Frenzy/Jump Up
Double : Mighty Blow, Piling On

Main blitzer, treat him like you would an elf blitzer. Pray for a double for Mighty Blow. Since he will most likely be your only Tackle piece for a while, its use is mostly to take down receivers that try a break away or blitz the ball carrier. I do put Tackle and Strip Ball on the same guy since i suggest to play with 2 blitzers and the other one, as well as the blockers, have better skills to take for their jobs. Frenzy is interesting, i'm not a fan but i can see benefits. If you ever get 2 double and grab Piling On, then Jump up is a great choice.

The defender build:

Skills : Dodge, Side Step, Diving Tackle, Shadowing/Jump Up/Tackle/Frenzy
Double : Guard

If you ever get to 3 blitzers, that's the way i would level him. You can literally throw him forward, less protected than your 2 main blitzers. His job is to harass the offence. Very useful to mark the ball carrier. Diving Tackle is awesome, especially against AG4. In fact, build him defensively, in a way that suits you. Rare are the things in Blood Bowl more annoying than a Blodgestepper with diving tackle.

The Blockers : 6/3/3/8 70k 0-4 Wrestle

GS Normal, AP Double

The blockers are the backbone of your team. Cherish them. A high level blocker is worth more than a high level knight. They're the ones that allow you to be bashy, and they will hold your line. I build them all the same. They need their 2 first skills ASAP, so you must feed them TDs, since wrestle won't help them getting SPPs from injuries.

Skills : Guard, Stand Firm, Mighty Blow/Tackle

Double : Jump Up/Skip/Dodge

I hear you, Stand firm as second skill?! Yeah, Stand Firm is the key there. Brets control the pitch with Fend and Side Step on the knights. Your blockers complement them with Stand Firm. I know, wrestle isn't the best for a Guard piece, so you have to learn where to put them so if your opponent blocks them, he had to block with his good players. Especially his Guard players. If an opponent's Guard piece is on the ground with yours, then the situation is in your favor, since you've invalidated his Guard and next turn your blocker will stand up.

Blockers predominantly stay near your knights. I usually position them in a tight screen right behind a loose screen of peasants or as cage corners. On defence, i usually engage 2 to help peasants block their markers. The other 2 usually stay behind, waiting for the opponent to commit before charging. Stand firm also helps you defend the sideline, and make a wonderful piece to put behind the peasants when defending in elf columns.

The Peasants : 6/3/2/7 40k 0-16 Fend

G Normal, APS Double

Pretty straightforward. They are here to get hit and get in the way. They are very useful to screen your way to the endzone. I usually position them in a loose screen, with blockers in a tight formation right behind. They'll die, a lot, so i suggest no double or stats on them.

Skills : Block/Dirty Player, Fire

Double : Skip

As i said, i would skip double and stats since its bloat on them. All they need is Block and/or Dirty Player. I hear you again, Block on AV7?! Wtf man you're crazy! Everyone say AV7 linemen = Wrestle. Why Block? Because you already have a lot of wrestle, and more importantly, think about what their job is. Tie up players and screen. Block achieves this goal way better than Wrestle. Block allow you to tie up players, even 2 if Nuffle helps you. It also keeps your loose screen safe if the opponent rolls a Both Down. Dirty Player is a must, since your strength access players have Wrestle, you'll rely on gang foul to grind a player advantage. At 40k, and most likely with at least 3 players on the bench, this is obvious.

The Offence :

If you receive first, or the score is tied in second half, you should aim for an 8 turns drive. Usually, i start moving forward around turn 4. The first turns, you should keep the ball out of reach, not at the end of your half like you would do with elves but in the middle, and try to hurt the opposition. Study your opponent and try to disrupt his defence. The ball being too far to reach, you can try and setup good foul opportunities. If your opponent send players forward to reach your ball carrier, it'll open holes where you can push to break his line. Most of the time, fouling for a couple of turns will irritate your opponent and he will take the bait and move assists to stop you. That will also leave holes open to push forward. Some players will say it won't work against them, because of so called discipline or what else. Don't believe them. When 2 of your pieces are cleared in two turn by AV7 meatbags, you can be sure he'll move to stop the nonsense.

When you see a good lane, move your linemen right behind the enemy line, 2 squares away from each other. They're your defensive screen that will hinder the opponent movement. Move 2 blockers behind the linemen and put your ball carrier between them. A ST3 blodge, sure hand side stepper don't need a full cage to be safe. Surrounded by 2 Guard/Stand firm blockers, unless your opponent has an st4 tackler, he's pretty much safe. The linemen that can't reach the hole and go through should mark the players that can reach your ball carrier and/or the biggest threat.

The Defence :

On defence you need to control the pitch. Usually, i put a loose screen of linemen in front, assisted with two Blockers. In reserve behind, keep 2 Blockers and your Blitzers in reserve to react to your opponent move.

Against bash, you really need to free your linemen every turn or you'll suffer casualties quickly. Don't be afraid to 1 die your marker at the end of the turn. You have more chance than not to free yourself. To disrupt your opponent formation, try to leave one wing open. He'll most likely try to push that way, moving his low MA high ST pieces through the gap. Once he committed enough low MA pieces to that side, close it down with tight Fend screen and Stand firm. Your opponent will most likely have to leave some of his slower pieces behind if he want to switch side. It's at this very moment that your reserve come into play. The goal here is to reduce the number of players in the fight. If your opponent have 5 players left to flank you, chances are your 4-5 players in reserve are way more skilled than his. Against agility team, any diving tackle blitzer will be used to mark any receivers coming in your backfield. Seek contact and make them pay for playing elves. Deny them deep penetration by keeping players in reserve. Elves have a hard time against guard and pitch control skills like stand firm, fend and side step. I tend to use my blockers on the front line more than against bash, making good use of guard to get hits in.

Starting lineup

The only one i would recommend in a perpetual environment is this one :

2x Blitzzer
4x Blocker
6x Lineman
3x Reroll
1x Apothecary

With 12 players and an apo from the start, you'll mitigate the AV7 linemen. 12 players also allow you to foul right from the beginning. 6 Block/Wrestle on the pitch is also more than most team. As previously said in early development stage your blockers should be the ones scoring, you need guard ASAP.

Short tournament :

For short tournament, forget what i said about only 2 blitzers. You need them all. The lineup would go this way :

4x Blitzzer
2x Blocker
5x Lineman
3x Reroll
1x Fan factor

Or if you want more sustainability (if you know there will be many bash teams) then you could go this way :

3x Blitzzer
3x Blocker
3x Reroll
and either
6x Lineman
1x Fan Factor
or
5x Lineman
1x Apothecary

That's my thoughts on them. Feel free to disagree, it's just the result of 400+ matches played with them and is obviously biased toward my playstyle. However i humbly think this is their niche in a perpetual league. Hope it helped and you enjoyed.

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