

We published two editions of the Dark Elves army book. This article allows players who own the first edition to update their book with the changes that have gone into the second edition.

**G**av: Being a Games Developer is one of the most entertaining and rewarding jobs you can have if you're into playing games. However, it's not without its challenges. As a Games Developer you face one of the greatest challenges after a game, book or article hits the shelves, because as soon as something is in black and white, that's it and everyone is going to have a chance to look at it, pick it apart at their leisure and analyse your every decision...

So what do you do when, after a couple of years, it becomes more and more evident that something needs changing? You don't have a magic wand to make

# DRUCHII REVISITED

*An update for the Dark Elves*

the instant changes everywhere. And you certainly don't have a magic doo-dah that means that everyone agrees on what the changes are to be. Finally, you don't have infinite time and resources to make sure that the changes are the right ones to make.

So that's the heady decision I faced with the Dark Elves revision. Thanks to the

players at [www.Druchii.net](http://www.Druchii.net), and feedback from players worldwide at events and through the post, a few common factors became clear. Dark Elves could be a 'competitive' army, and showed well at tournaments. However, it became apparent that those armies were not using a sizeable proportion of the beautifully sculpted miniatures range.

## Warhammer Armies: Dark Elves update

There was one overriding concern for the revision: to ensure that the modifications are straightforward and do not introduce any further contradictions with existing rules or Q+A, and easy to implement and remember for players. In light of this, I have focussed the update on what I perceive to be the most deserving cases.

The updates are detailed below. If you want 'cut & paste' entries to stick into your Dark Elves Armies book you can download them for free from our website at:

[www.games-workshop.com/white dwarf](http://www.games-workshop.com/white_dwarf)

- P7, 31, 80. Replace Black Guard Hatred with Eternal Hatred:

**Eternal Hatred: Black Guard are vicious killers and hate everyone and everything. In addition, hatred continues to have an effect in second and subsequent rounds of a combat.**

*Gav: For the elite Black Guard, I wanted to increase their abilities to match their points value, rather than reduce their points value to match their existing abilities. Combined with the fact that they are stubborn, and have a high Initiative, Eternal Hatred makes engaging the Black Guard a daunting prospect.*

- P8, 29, 80. Increase Ld of Cold One Knights to 9.
- P29. Two Cold One Chariots may be taken for a single Special choice.

*Gav: Stupidity is a factor of the army – just like animosity is for Orcs and Gobbos. I didn't want to do anything dull which would effectively make it pointless giving certain things stupidity in the first place. This way I hope that players who want to reduce the effect of stupidity can do so, without negating it totally. There were all kinds of suggestions here for Cold One Knights re-rolling their Ld*

*for stupidity, or cancelling it out after the first combat round, and so on. I decided on the direct route of increasing their Leadership (as befits elite Elven cavalry anyway) so that players no longer have to include a Noble to 'babysit' the unit.*

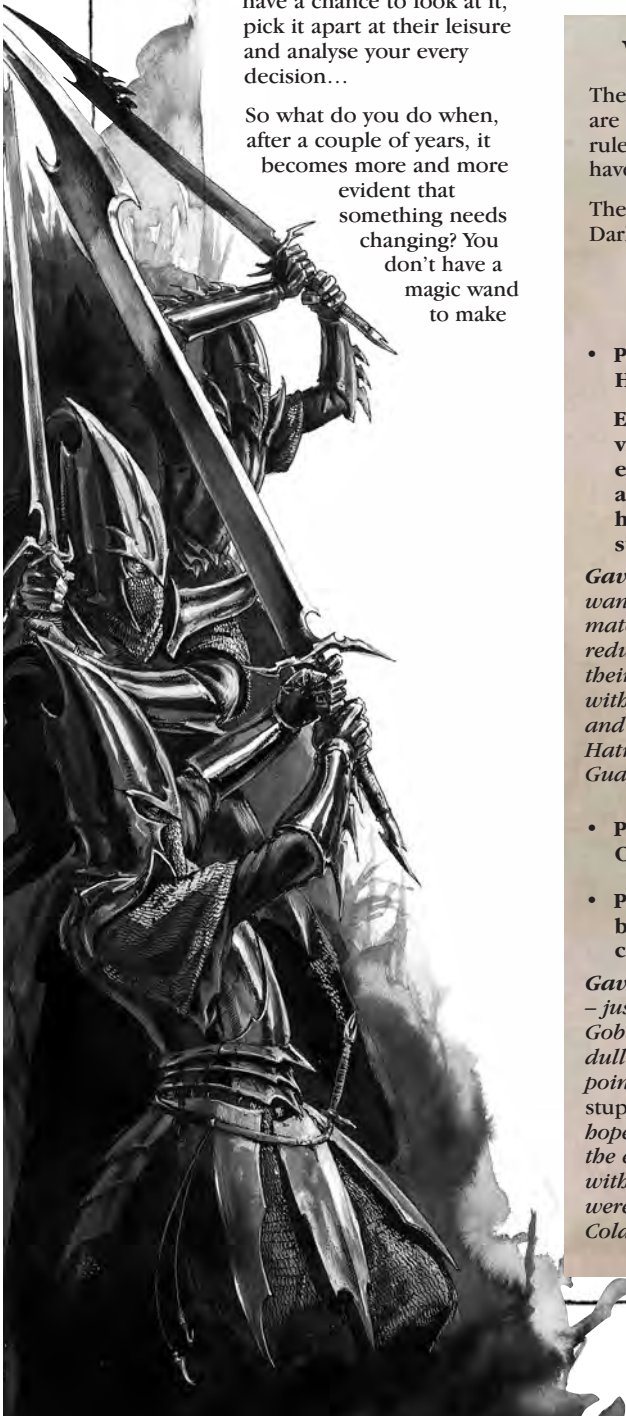
*The Chariots change is to make it a more viable tactic to build some anti-stupidity redundancy into the army – I could justify a Ld increase for the elite heavy cavalry of the army, but I prefer offering people a tactical option to mitigate Chariot stupidity, rather than many of the suggestions that were put forward such as Beastmaster special rules to re-roll or ignore stupidity within a certain range.*

- P10. Add following to Frenzy rules for Witch Elves:

**While frenzied Witch Elves still hate High Elves although normally immune to psychology.**

*Gav: This makes Witch Elves tie-in with Dwarf Trollslayers with regard to their psychology.*

- P10. Change line of first para of Cauldron of Blood from "Any shooting hits scored against the unit are divided evenly between the Guardians" to "Any shooting hits scored against the unit are randomised between the



Therefore, the primary goal of the update was not to increase the power of the army significantly, but to allow players to field a wider selection of their miniatures collection and feel that they were not somehow handicapping themselves by doing so.

The other major part of the update came about from inconsistencies that had developed between the rules and the miniatures. For example, an almost daily clarion call could be heard for Har Ganeth Executioners to have heavy armour – the miniatures certainly have heavy-looking armour.

So after much thought, conversations and exchanged e-mails with the guys at Druchii.net, I had a list of errata (such as the heavy armour thing) and a list of updates. In the end, I chose the simplest,

most easily implemented and remembered rules. There were many more fine-tuning ideas but those will have to be saved for when we get back to the Dark Elf Armies book in the future. The last thing I wanted to do with an update was to cause confusion amongst Warhammer players. The update itself is given here, along with a few brief notes from myself on why the particular changes were made.

Since news of the Dark Elf revision has begun to spread, there have been growing voices for us to revisit other Armies books. One in particular, the High Elves, has had a great deal of ideas passed back and forth. However, at the moment I have no plans to revisit any of the other armies until we have the opportunity to do a proper revision by updating the book. I admit that the Dark Elves were a

special case, not least because as the author of the book I was growing more unsatisfied with some of the opportunities that had been missed. All-in-all, I'd rather we spent our time making sure that the next army, the Bretonnians, are top notch, that the many variant army lists planned for Storm of Chaos are entertaining and challenging, and that we press on expanding the scope of Warhammer games rather than get bogged down revisiting the past. We constantly strive to improve, but there's a time and a place for everything, and sometimes that isn't just yet.

We've asked the chaps at Druchii.net for their thoughts on how they went about helping on this project, and what the revisions means to them as Dark Elf players.



Executioners now have the armour their models suggest.

Guardians and Cauldron in the same manner as war machines (discounting any hits against the Cauldron itself)".

- P10. Increase range of Cauldron of Blood's Red Fury to 24".

*Gav:* With increased range and a little more protection against shooting, hopefully the Cauldron will stop being an arrow-magnet! Note that we will also change the Dwarf Anvil of Doom to resolve shooting in the same way.

- P11. Add to first para of Assassin Hidden rule: "Alternatively, he may deploy as a Scout".

*Gav:* This just seemed sensible and means that they can be used to pick on

war machine crews, skirmishers, etc, rather than just enemy Hero-level characters. This does mean that they can also be deployed with a unit of Shades (although not Hidden, of course).

- P13, 31, 80. War Hydra Apprentices' Movement increased to 6.

*Gav:* This gives them the same Movement as their monster, which seems eminently sensible!

- P17. Word of Pain spell. Add, "including units in combat" to the end of the second sentence.

*Gav:* Because Word of Pain couldn't be cast into combat, this meant that the enemy had a chance to dispel it on the

turn of casting, in their next Magic phase, and then again in the Magic phase after, assuming that you actually charged into combat in your next turn... Now it can be used to bolster a unit already in combat.

- P19. Blood Armour, add "total save" before 1+ in the last sentence.
- P27. Give Beastmaster a light armour option for +2 pts, and sea dragon cloak option for +6 pts. Add lance option to Beastmaster for +4 pts.

*Gav:* These now represent the equipment on the Beastmaster model and afford him extra protection against enemy shooting.

- P30. Executioners have heavy armour as standard, no points change.

*Gav:* The most obvious change of all! Of course they have heavy armour, just look at 'em!

- P28. Decrease Dark Elf Warriors points to 7 points each.

*Gav:* The most contentious and debated of the revisions, the Warriors points reduction was made in context of the whole army list, not just the individual troop type, so cross-list comparisons aren't necessarily useful. When putting together 2,000 or 3,000 points for your army, investment in Warriors with spears (supposedly the core of a Dark Elf force) gives you a points break for other units, magic items, upgrades etc. This means that one adjustment can be made, rather than half a dozen.

Hopefully we'll be seeing other kinds of Dark Elves armies appearing on the battlefield by the end of the year.



## DRUCHII.NET

It was a great day for Dark Elf players when Gav agreed that we at Druchii.net could work with him to make some much needed amendments to the Dark Elf army list. Many Dark Elf players and their opponents were in agreement that the list had some areas which needed to be addressed to make the army more fluid, and to make the whole range of Dark Elf units viable choices. After all, the Druchii have some of the best looking miniatures in the game!

The project itself was administered on Druchii.net with regular communication with Gav via e-mail and the odd meeting or two in Bugman's (where we thrashed out the merits of casting *Word of Pain* into combat), and a great number of players, both Druchii and their opponents, were given the opportunity to both voice their opinions about what changes were most necessary and to playtest suggested changes.

The end result of this year-long project you now see before you. The 'Petition team' at Druchii would like to thank all those who took the time to help out, from the many posters and play-testers at Druchii.net, to the hundreds of posters all over the internet and most of all to those at Games Workshop, who were a pleasure to work with.

*Gary Moore AKA Dark Alliance, Admin on Druchii.net*

## PUTTING IT ALL INTO PRACTICE

So, now you've seen what the updates are, but how do they affect Dark Elves on the field of battle? We've asked Caillin Langmann, moderator from Druchii.net, to give us an insight on what these changes mean to Dark Elf lords.

**Caillin:** Most Dark Elf players prefer to play their armies in an agile and offensive style because expensive T3 troops cannot afford to constantly suffer attrition each round.

### WARRIORS

When considering the obvious advantages of each core troop type, Dark Riders and Corsairs seemed to be the most effective choice whilst the Warrior equipped with a shield, costing the same as a Corsair, never really seemed to have a place. The Corsair, with two Attacks on the charge, a 5+ Armour save (4+ vs shooting) was clearly the most advantageous choice, even if you thought that you might get charged.

Consider the army background. The Warrior is the mainstay of the Dark Elf army. Each Dark Elf citizen spends his or her life training for battle and thus even with a relatively smaller population than some of the other

racess, the Dark Elves can field a large contingent of well-trained Warriors. Knowing this, and being conniving and heartless, a Dark Elf general should not be afraid to sacrifice a unit of Warriors for the greater good of the race. Alas, in game terms, who would sacrifice a unit of Warriors when, for the same price, you could buy a Corsair unit to use for flanking?

Seven point Warriors fit the background and the game mechanics perfectly. Now each Core unit has a role. Warriors are a decent group of fighters (WS4), quick (15) and effective in battle, yet more defensive in nature as expected from trained citizen militia. Warriors cover a broad diversity of roles from large blocks of rank boosting units to small units for feints and sacrifices on the battlefield. This also has beneficial effects on other units. Small units of Corsairs, resistant to being reduced by enemy shooting, can serve as rapid flankers when teamed up with larger units of Warriors. This also

reflects the background as the Corsair is supposed to be rarer than the Warrior and more specialised for assault.

Here is a simple tactic to take out a more powerful unit that can be effectively employed with the Warrior unit. Prepare a bait unit of 10 Warriors for 70 points. Place them in front of another 10 to 15 Warriors with shields for 80 to 120 points. Add a third unit of 10 Corsairs with full command or 5 Dark Riders, or even a heavier hitting elite unit on the flank of the Warriors with shields. Our rapid movement can allow us to set up a flank charge on a more powerful enemy by marching our bait unit right up to the front of the enemy providing him with almost no choice but to charge the bait or get outmanoeuvred. The bait unit will surely be run down, but if you have placed your shield Warriors correctly, he will overrun into them. Now it is your turn and you can charge in with the flanking unit of your choice, negating his ranks and gaining a flank bonus. This can usually be enough to win combat depending on which flankers you have chosen to use. If he holds after chasing off your bait, you should be able to charge in with the shield Warriors and flank in with your flanking unit provided you have moved properly.

Variations of this tactic can be employed using the now cheaper Warriors armed with repeater crossbows, Warriors that can be used as both your bait and to harass the enemy with shooting.

In the context of the Warrior, the other elite units get that much better. Nothing gives better frontal charge support than a Chariot. Combine the Chariot charge with that of a unit of Warriors, even repeater crossbow armed Warriors with



*The Cauldron of Blood is more potent with the new update.*



*With their lower points cost Dark Elf Warriors should form the basis of most Dark Elf armies.*

shields, and you have a recipe for mayhem. Now that Chariots are a two for one Special choice, you can bring two into a game and reduce the effects of *stupidity*.

## EXECUTIONERS

Executioners are an excellent flanking unit. They hit hard and are capable of bringing down even Knights. However they were very vulnerable (T3 and only a 6+ Armour save). Now they have heavy armour, making them more resilient to those pesky S3 shooting or close combat attacks. Bring a small unit of 10 into battle and team them with Warriors and you have flankers that can damage even Chaos Warriors and will crush Dwarfs and other such rabble with certainty. Put the Banner of Murder on them and watch your enemy be stunned as they flank him when he thought he was out of range!

## BEASTMASTERS

The Hydra is capable of setting up flank charges now as well. This beast with 5 WS4 S5 attacks combined with 4 more WS4 S3 attacks is the perfect assault unit. Now that the Apprentices can move as fast as the Hydra, your beast with a 12" march and 6" move can be in the right place at the right time, and the Apprentices can charge as far as the Hydra meaning that they get into combat right away. With a large charge arc and mobility, the Hydra can support more than one unit at a time.

Speaking of flanking, a Beastmaster on a Manticore is quite capable of getting behind enemy lines, causing *terror* and wheeling about to charge the enemy in the rear. However, the Beastmaster was quite vulnerable to shooting, and when he was killed the Manticore didn't have the Unit Strength to negate ranks. Now with light armour and a sea dragon cloak the Beastmaster has a 4+ Armour save against shooting and magic

missiles. Moreover he can carry a lance for a devastating two WS4 S5 attacks! Hitting most enemy units in the rear with this negates all his ranks, and likely causes enough wounds to break them! You can take him and a Highborn on a Manticore as well in a 2,000 points game causing *terror* and the collapse of the enemy early in the game. Evil.

## COLD ONE KNIGHTS

How frustrating is *stupidity*? Enough that the deadly Cold One Knight requires constant babysitting by at least a Noble in order not to be rendered *stupid* two turns in every game! Now your Cold One Knights have Leadership 9 and do not require a Noble, meaning you can take more than one unit into a game and use them to provide support. Smash through enemy units, such as Empire detachments, to get behind the enemy and equip them with the Banner of Murder so they can get the jump on most enemy knights in the game. In terms of background, Cold One Knights have no sensation due to the poison of the Cold One. Therefore feeling no wounds and being of noble birth, fleeing from battle is beneath them. Ld9 reflects this well.

## BLACK GUARD

To many the Black Guard are the most beautiful man-sized models in the game. Now they are even more potent in battle as well. When your Black Guard are hit hard by knights, Eternal Hatred will allow them to re-roll all misses on subsequent rounds meaning that you get the combined benefits of *hatred* and *stubborn* instead of usually one or the other. Moreover Eternal Hatred makes them more survivable since you tend to strike first, and now cause more hits each round. Each kill means one less enemy to hit back at you, which for T3 Elves makes all the difference. That's better than armour if you ask us! Eternal Hatred makes the Black Guard deadly in

the subtle and lithe way of Elves instead of the brute strength of the other races, and we felt that was perfect.

## CAULDRON OF BLOOD

The Cauldron was rarely used, as all missile fire hit the Guardians, meaning it could be taken out very easily by shooting. Add to that its limited range of only 18" and you can see why Dark Elf generals left it at home. Now with a 24" range and shooting randomised, you can place this in the forefront of your army and expect to reap the rewards.

Re-rolling wounds with every unit can mean the difference between the enemy making or failing his Combat Resolution rolls.

## ROUNDING OFF...

Finally, let's consider some of the more subtle changes. The *Word of Pain* spell can now be cast into combat. Previously, if you wanted to affect a close combat round, you had to cast the spell the turn before charging the enemy. Not good when they get three attempts to dispel it, two of which are at the basic casting value. Now you can charge with a unit and then cast *Word of Pain* into the combat causing the enemy to stumble in battle before you (you hit on 3s and they hit on 5s!).

Tired of enemy mages hiding in forests, beside units, or war machines? The Assassin can now be deployed behind enemy lines singly or in a unit of Shades (he cannot be hidden in Shades but can join that unit). With a charge of 12" the Assassin can outmanoeuvre any single character, chasing the wretch down. Also he can charge into a war machine crew and, with the help of some Shadow magic, maybe even on the first turn!

With some simple changes, the Dark Elf army becomes more deadly, subtle, and manoeuvrable than ever before. We couldn't ask for more than that.