

BLOOD BOWL

The Lucky Sevens

One of the Blood Bowl Team competition winners

By Dave Jakowyszyn

Betting scams have always run rife among the ranks of Blood Bowl, but this tale can act as a cautionary tale to all those tempted to make an easy coin...

Albrecht Dollarsharp was a Blood Bowl coach and a good one, not a great one, but a good one. He'd spent years coaching teams of all races and doing reasonably well. He'd never made the big-time and he knew why, his rotten luck. He'd seen so many teams he'd spent time and effort coaching, getting beaten by a touchdown off a lucky fumble.



Eventually Albrecht realised that luck could be his key to success, not good luck though, (lucky players cost far too much) but bad luck! If Albrecht could collect the unluckiest players in the league, he could produce a team that lost every time, not through match fixing or doping, or obvious cheating, but through bad luck! It would be impossible to prove anything about their loss, who could prove luck? Once he had his team, he could then secretly bet against them and gain a nice enough pile of coin to buy a successful team to take him to the top of the league and make his name.

Albrecht got to work, he scoured the league gazettes, spoke to fellow coaches and watched as many matches as he could, trying to spot the players who displayed the worst fortune.

Eventually after months of searching, researching, negotiating and arranging, he had his team, the Lucky Sevens:

Norman 'Swiftarm' Wilburton. A thrower with the agility of an Amazon Cheerleader and the sure hands of a Middenheim midwife. He was on his way to a fantastic career, but it came to an abrupt halt when Norman lost his legs to a Dwarven Deathroller. Many players have suffered crippling injuries to secret weapons on the field; unfortunately Norman was in bed at the time of his accident. As he was tucked up in fine elven blankets in his mansion on the outskirts of Salzenmund, a dwarf craftsman working on a deathroller in the slums of the city, miscalculated the boiler pressure and the machine exploded. Eyewitness reports have it that the deadly spiked roller was seen shooting out of the roof atop a giant fireball and arcing away towards the exclusive 'millionaires' district. Norman was awoken by an almighty crash and saw the roller bearing down on him. It destroyed his house and took his legs with it. To this day Norman can only get around in his specially designed metal legs... constructed from the remnants of that Deathroller.

Johann Hapstein. A Blitzter typifying the team's bad luck. Johann was offered a lucrative sponsorship deal with 'Bloodweiser' but didn't turn up to sign the contract. He'd been sampling a few bottles beforehand and needed to go to the toilet before his big appearance. He went through an adjoining door into what he thought was the bathroom, unfortunately, it was a store cupboard. The door jammed and he got stuck in. After three days he was discovered by a cleaner, by which time the contract had been given to Rupert Rupertson of the Albion Allstars.

Nicholas Mynott. A blitzter with a terrible stutter due to being struck by lightning during a league match a year previously.

Boris 'Omelette-Face' Umberg. A catcher recruited by Dollarsharp after an incident at a league match in Wolfenburg. Boris had a promising career in Blood Bowl ahead of him and would have gone on to great things if it hadn't been for his humiliating accident one day. A recent investigation by scientists at the University of Ostland say that is practically unheard of for a giant eagle to lay an egg in mid air, but they agree that when it does, it can look remarkably like a thrown football.

Wilhelm Grimdolt. Accidentally declared dead for 6 months due to a clerical mix-up at Blood Bowl HQ. He protested against the decision, but had to wait for a number of forms to be processed. Unable to play for his team, he stood in as a catcher for the Carrion Feasters (a successful undead team) until the matter was resolved.

Heinrich Locke. Heinrich is famous for throwing some of the longest passes in the league, however, they always seem to go just a bit too far and normally end up in VIP spectator boxes. He has injured and offended some of the most powerful people in the Old World.

Stephan Kisdsl. Bad luck is often called an 'Act of God', and Stephan Kisdsl's is no exception. He bears a striking resemblance to a man known for robbing temples in Cathay. As a result, he is regularly attacked by any travelling monks from the area, who wish to punish him for his sins.

Adam Kerse. Whenever Adam Kerse took to the pitch for his old team, the opposing team would score, even if he was nowhere near the ball or area of play at the time. He eventually became classed as so unlucky by his team mates that they fired him and wouldn't even let him in the stadium to watch any of their matches.

Rupert Nickerson. Known as Naked Nickerson, he has repeatedly, through no fault of his own, taken to the field in his underwear. He has, over the last three seasons, lost his kit four times, shrunk it in the wash twice and on one occasion had it torn off by the opposing teams mascot.

Jorgen Bearsson. A Linesman. As the name suggests this player is massively strong. It is thought that his strength is the only thing that saved his life when a tornado swept through (and destroyed) his house, which he had just finished building. Strangely no one else in the village was affected by the hurricane.

Drogo and Sancho Bullhead. Linesman twins who regularly knock each other unconscious when both running for the same catch, or tackle, or stagecoach...

With the team all set, Albrecht began training them for their first League match. He worked the players hard and would often admit to himself that they did show real talent, it did seem purely to be 'luck' that spoiled their skill, a dropped ball, a fumble, a trip, all added up to one of the worst overall teams he'd ever seen.

The first league match for the Lucky Sevens arrived, against the Nuln River Boaters. Turnout was poor and the takings hardly covered the teams half-time refreshments. Albrecht smiled though, he just kept thinking of the 5000 gold coins he had on the opposing team to win.



The game started as Albrecht had expected, his team lost the toss and the opposition went ahead as the Bullhead twins missed a tackle and knocked each other out, allowing Tod Brightwater from the Boaters to score. Everything was going according to plan and Albrecht started mentally spending his winnings. As the Lucky Sevens kicked off something strange happened, Heinrich Locke threw a long bomb to 'Omelette-Face' Umberg who misjudged it and had it bounce off his head; the ball flew straight into the arms of Johann Hapstein who had just come onto the pitch after being stuck in his locker in the changing room, he couldn't believe his luck and ran to the endzone, narrowly escaping a tackle as one of the Boaters tripped over 'Naked' Nickerson who was sat on the pitch putting on a pair of trousers that a fan had lent him. The Lucky Sevens had scored! Albrecht looked on in disbelief...

The game continued, the opposing team playing as best they could but being hampered by the bad luck of the Sevens. When one of the Sevens missed a catch or tripped over, it seemed to work out even worse for the Boaters. By the time of the final play of the match, the scores were tied, the meagre crowd was going wild at the spectacle and the Sevens had the ball to kick off. Stephan Kidsel kicked the ball to Adam Kerse who promptly missed it and tripped over. It was picked up by one of the Boaters who started running back up the pitch to the Seven's endzone. The Bullhead Twins went in to tackle and managed to knock each other out. Then out of nowhere came Jorgen Bearsson and brought down the Boater with a flying tackle. Nickerson came running in, picked up the ball and started running. The crowd looked on in amazement as he covered half the length of the pitch with his trousers down around his ankles and most of the opposing team in hot pursuit. Eventually a blocker from the Boaters managed to stop him in his tracks but not before he passed the ball to Norman Wilburton who managed to limp over the line just prior to being crushed under the combined weight of the Boaters. The whistle blew, the crowd went wild, the Sevens were triumphant!

Albrecht was distraught; he'd lost half his savings on the game! How could such an unlucky team do so well? Could it be that each player's bad luck was cancelling out the misfortune of the other players? Could the team be so unlucky that they couldn't lose? No, he thought, it's not possible, the team was bound to lose the next match, and lose badly.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave Jakowyszyn is a big Blood Bowl fan. Well done to him for winning this competition. Unfortunately for Dave he's out of the country for the summer so will have to wait a while to claim his prize.

For the next match, Albrecht placed the last of his savings on the opposing team, but the Sevens won again! This can't be possible, thought Albrecht; they've got to lose soon.

As the league continued, the team kept winning and Albrecht kept losing. As the league ratings and crowd figures were rising, Albrecht's debts were growing and growing. The team was a national institution and Albrecht was hailed as a hero, but he couldn't understand the success. All he wanted was for the Sevens to lose so that he could win his bets. He wasn't aware of the glittering sponsorship deals he was being offered or the offers of remarkable coaching jobs, all he wanted was for his team to lose.

Eventually the end of the season approached, and the Sevens found themselves in the final for the Blood Bowl Trophy! The team couldn't believe it, but Dollarsharp didn't even register his success, he had become fixated on the idea of the team losing just one match. It had gone beyond money, it was an obsession.

Albrecht's betting had cost him dear and he had built up some big debts. The night before the grand final, he had a visit from some money collectors, they told him that he had 24 hours to pay up or he'd lose his team, his house and his head. Albrecht didn't sleep a wink all night, terrified of what would happen if he couldn't come up with the money. Then, as dawn broke, he realised what he needed to do...

The whole of the Old World was watching the day that the Lucky Sevens stepped onto the Astrogranite pitch to take on the Orcland Raiders in the final for the league. The stadium was packed, and the entire crowd were there to see Blood Bowl history being made as a team from out of nowhere came up through the league in one season to take the cup.

The Sevens played well that day, they really lived up to their potential and used all their skill. The honour of playing at this level brought out the best in them; unfortunately they had luck on their side. Their bad luck, the thing that had made them great had disappeared, leaving them as a middle of the road, standard team. They got destroyed...

As the team were carried off the field after the final whistle, they expected to be consoled by their coach but he was nowhere to be seen. The team looked all over, but here was no sign of him. Although there were a lot of large men who came looking for Albrecht inquiring about his finances.

With Albrecht missing, the team went up for auction. The team exists to this day, languishing in the lower reaches of the league. Not doing too badly, but not doing too well either.

An official league investigation into Albrecht's disappearance discovered that, the night before the final, Albrecht had realised his team was a success. He'd realised that he was a successful, famous coach and he'd realised that he was in major problems with his debt. In the hours of darkness he had raced all around the city borrowing money from every loan shark that he could find. With his new found confidence in his team he placed one final bet, that the Sevens would win the final. When the Sevens lost Albrecht was saddled with more debts than any man could ever repay and thought it wise to vanish.

Gambling officials are currently investigating an incident in Middenheim; a man was stopped by a beggar and asked for money; the man gave him a few coins but was viciously attacked when he offered the traditional pleasantry of 'be lucky'.