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Table of Content

0. Introduction – or is this the right guide for me?.....	1
1. General theory about how to win a game.....	2
2. The Energy System.....	2
The consequences of the energy system.....	4
3. The counter system.....	5
4. How to use spells.....	6
5. Common Strategies.....	7
6. Strengths and Weaknesses of the fractions.....	8
7. Examples of good combinations and how to find them.....	9
8. How to build your deck.....	10
9. Basic Micromanagement.....	10
10. Map specific tricks.....	11
11. Abbreviations.....	11
Buff:.....	11

0. Introduction – or is this the right guide for me?

This guide is addressed to all players who want to learn to play PvP well and want to learn to think more like a good player. This guide isn't a tutorial and will not show you concrete strategies like summon two Sunderers, attack and win. It will explain to you the most important aspects of the game and how to counter a specific group of cards (e.g. all air units) in general. For an experienced player it could be that this guide contains nothing new. I will describe Battleforge as a RTS so I expect that you have all important cards for your faction, otherwise you might not be able to counter a specific strategy. I will always assume that we are talking about a fully upgraded and charged card. I don't want to show you which strategies are slightly stronger than others. So if you search for OP-cards this is the wrong guide for you.

If you don't understand a word like cc-spell, buff, ... you should read chapter eleven .

1. General theory about how to win a game

Everyone who reads this guide should know that you have to destroy all your opponents ground units and buildings or monuments for a minute to win a match. In reality you win a match if you have more energy than your opponent. More energy is equal to more or stronger units and if your energy advantage is high enough you should be able to win the match.

That's the most important thing in this game: **Power**.

You have to think about how much you need, how much your opponent has, and what he could do with his power. Normally there is no need to spam units far away from the opponents base and then attack - you just tell your opponent with which units you come so he can prepare.

Of course, if you spawn units away from your base they start with half their life, but normally this is not a disadvantage. You just have to think if your opponent can get your spawned units down before they get full HP - then spawning units is wasted power, because you pay full power and just get a half unit. The next important point is to place your units not together, so your opponent can't catch them all at once, for example with an Eruption.

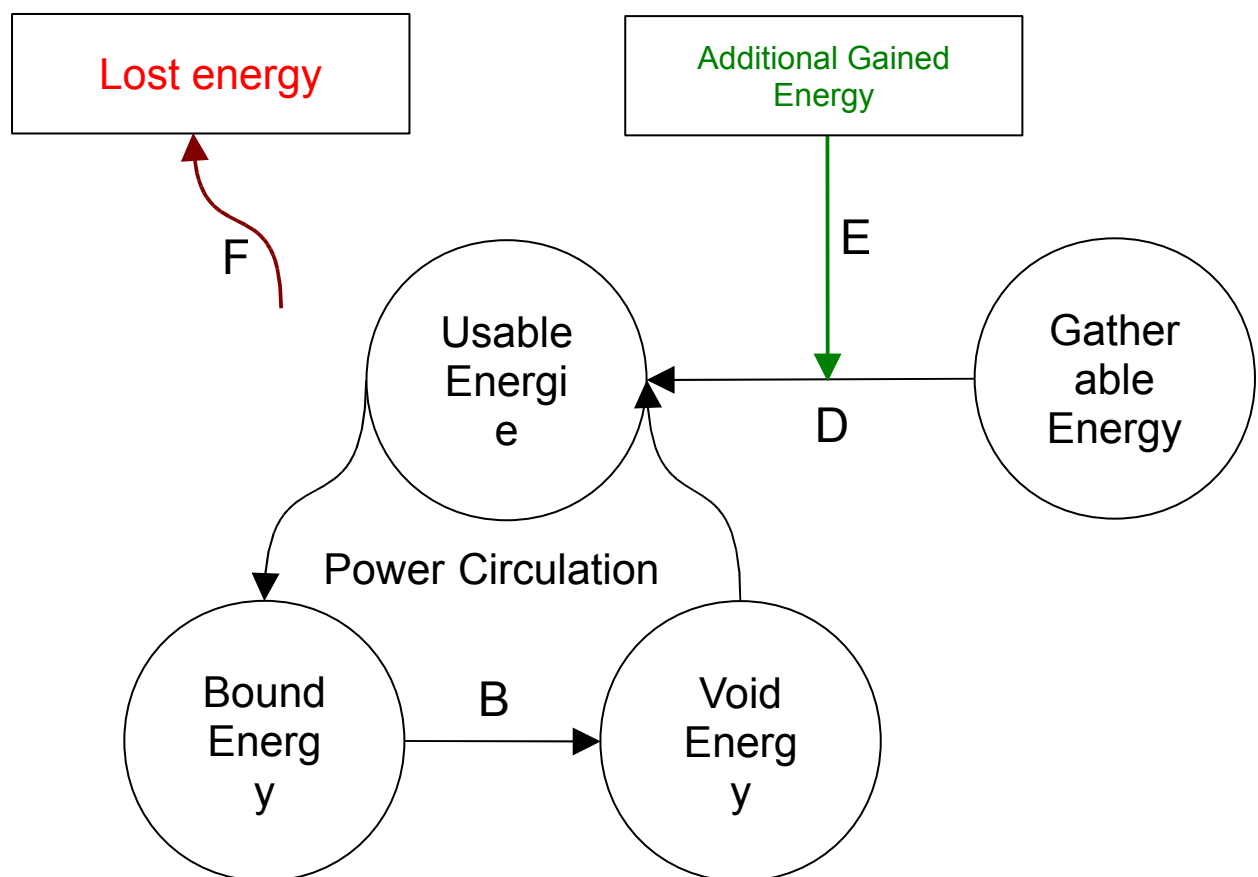
So what to do in the first seconds? To decide this, you need to know what you want to play: Rush in T1 or T2 or defend in T1, better in T2? The next important point is the map. If the map is small a T1 or T2 rush is good. So you start either with strong T1 units or with units which cost little power so that you have enough power to get a second orb.

If the map is large, always start with a Power Well and afterwards orb. When your opponent goes T2 you still have enough time to build your T2 orb until his one has finished and his units reach you. Then you have the power advantage.

To understand how to use your energy effective you have to understand the energy system.

2. The Energy System

There are 4 energy pools: the void energy, the actual usable energy, the used energy and the gather energy. There is a Power circulation between 3 of them: The usable energy flows into the bound energy when you play a card (A). The used energy flows into the void energy (B) after a summoned unit dies or instantly after a spell is played or a building is destroyed. And the void energy flows slowly (as faster as more void energy you have) back into the usable energy (C). So you get your used energy back over time and can use it again: the circulation restarts.



Its more interesting how you can gain and loose energy. You loose energy each time you play a card or build something (F), because the conversion from the usable to the void energy consumes power. The following table shows you how much energy is converted from the usable to the void energy after your building is destroyed, ability or spell used or a unit died.

Action	Regained energy	Lost energy
Unit, normal building, spell	90%	10%
Ability	100%	0%
Power Well, Monument	0%	100%

The lost energy of units, spells and normal buildings doesn't really matter, but you loose 100 permanent energy when u build a well and even more by building a monument the first time.

You gain 1 energy every 2 seconds for each well (D). The power flows from the gather able energy to the usable energy. The gather able energy is extremely high that it doesn't matter in PvP, because the matches don't last that long. As a consequence, wells are the normal way to gain additional energy, but you will loose 100 energy permanently for building them. So you have to defend your well for 200 seconds (3,3 minutes) before you gain a power advantage.

There are some special cards to gain additional energy:

a) The Energy Parasite:

This unit is very fragile and weak in combat, but it can leech energy from the opponents wells. You gain 50 energy from each leeching and your opponent loses gatherable energy. Gaining 50 energy is as good as destroying a half well. So your opponent has to kill the parasite before it reaches his well.

b) Card with the ability looter (Strikers, Thugs):

Normally you should gain power for attacking buildings. In reality this ability is bugged and grants no additional energy.

The consequences of the energy system

- It is the same if you gain a power advantage or your opponent gains a power disadvantage
- Build wells only when you are sure that you can defend all your wells for 200 seconds
- Build monuments only when you are sure that you can defend them for a while. 400 Power is a good amount of power to build the third monument. (but less is often enough, but be sure your opponent does not crush you while going T3, be sure you have the advantage before that, otherwise he has equal energy and probably destroys your monument before it is finished)
- Your main goal as attacker is to destroy the opponents wells and monuments (monuments mainly after T3, because the gap between the card strength of T2 and T3 cards is much higher than the gap between T1 and T2).
- When you got some units, use these units or sacrifice them. Else they're just waste of power (they bind the energy) It's always better to build a power well or monument instead of having inactive units.
- Avoid defensive buildings or walls. They bind power and are useless. When you see an opponent building (defensive buildings), build a few wells and you will gain a power advantage. Or attack at another place, then your opponent has less power there to defend. (this does not count for attacking with towers or walls)
- Always build the right counter-units and use T2 to counter T2, T3 to counter T3 units, because they are stronger for the same price (more cost efficient). There are only a few exceptions: e.g. it can be useful to build T1 support units (like frost sorceress) even when you reached T2.
- Don't build the fourth monument, it is too expensive and PvP-matches nearly never reach T4, and you need the space for cards of T1-T3 in your deck, 20 slots can be pretty less card slots than cards you want to use in your deck. If you want to use a T4 card you could use the card Enlightenment.

→ Destroying a well or monument in the early game is often enough to win a match, if your opponent does not do the same thing to you. So protect your wells and orbs but destroy your opponent ones.

3. The counter system

To understand which units you should build, you have to understand the counter system. Every unit has an armour and a weapon type. S-weapons gain 50% bonus damage against S-armour, M-weapons gain 50% bonus damage against M-armour, L-weapons gain 50% bonus damage against L-armour and XL-weapons gain 50% bonus damage against XL-armour. So if your opponent builds e.g. an M/M (weapon type/armour type) you should build an M/not-M unit to counter it, because your unit gains a 50% damage bonus and your opponents unit not. This should work normally even though there are some weak units in general (e.g. Mauler). If you don't have such a unit, like no L-damage unit T1 against Sunderer, you should build another unit so that your opponent gains no damage bonus or you both gain the damage bonus. T3-cards are stronger than T2-cards and T2-cards are stronger than T1 units. Its always better to play the cards with the highest orb-requirement you can play.

There are some special cases:

a) Knock back - effects

XL-Units can knock back M- and S-units and L-units can knock back S-units. So you should never build these units against L or XL-units. There are two exceptions: Lyrish Knights, because they have the steadfast ability (immune against knock back) near own buildings and Forsaken, because they are a very strong T1-unit in general.

You can use knock back-effects as your advantage. E.g. you could build a Makeshift Tower, summon a Frost Mage or use the spell Hurricane if your opponent has a lot of S-units.

b) Buffs

Buffs can compensate the weakness of a unit. E.g. a Skyfire Drake with only a very few life points is much stronger with Ravage and nearly immortal with Ravage and Unholy Power. To counter a buffed unit, you often have to buff your own units too or use a cc-spell (neues wort muss erklärt werden) to let the opponent's buff run out.

c) Shadow units

Many Shadow units are stronger than normal units when using their activated ability. So you can only run away sometimes (and protect your buildings with a spell like glacier shell if they are near your base) or use a cc-spell and wait until the negative effect of the ability appears. Some shadow units like Nightcrawlers even die after using their ability.

d) Air units

You can't attack air units with melee units. So you have to use ranged or air units against them. In T1 and T3 you should be able to counter air units, like every other unit, because the ranged units are very strong. In T2 a buffed air unit can be very strong. But they are very expensive too. There are only two T2 air units, which can attack ground units and buildings: the Skyfire Drake and the Wareagle (you can count the Shadow Phoenix more as a spell). Both, especially the Skyfire Drake have few life points. So they are weak against spells. e.g. you can kill a ravaged Skyfire Drake with an unit + Nasty Surprise, archers/flying anti-air + damage spell (Eruption or Parasite), Parasite Swarm + ability. Wareagles are weak against every flying anti-air unit, because they can't attack air units. Many archers are no good air counters, because they don't deal enough damage to kill a buffed air unit. Only the Defenders combined with Home Soil or Darkelf Assassins are strong enough. The unit Shadow Mage and the Parasite Swarm are perfect air counters, but require pure orbs.

Air units should be able to counter every T2-melee unit, especially M-units.

e) Support units

Support units like the Frost Sorceress (shield), Frost Mage (knock back) or Shadow Insect (damage) are weak in combat. But their abilities are dangerous, so it often makes sense to attack the support units before you attack the main army.

f) Swift

Swift units are faster than normal units. So they can avoid their counter units and attack at another place. It is often very hard to counter them without any own swift unit or spending more power than your opponent.

g) Buildings

Siege units like Firestalker or Firedancer are one of the best counters for buildings, especially while they are being build up.

4. How to use spells.

You can divide spells up in 4 categories:

a) Damage spells and healing spells

Most damage spells in Battleforge are area of effect spells. That means that they are only cost-efficient against a group of units. Only if your opponent spawns units with summoning sickness is a damage spell efficient against a single unit. Fire damage spells deal instant damage. So they are good for killing buildings during construction. The spell aura of pain is useless, because it doesn't deal enough damage. Backlash can one hit everything including whole bases if you have enough void power, but it is only useful in very very long matches. The only good nature damage spell (Parasite) is a damage over time spell. Sadly it is bugged. So you have to use a cc-spell like ensnaring roots, otherwise it does not deal enough damage. Parasite is like most damage spells very effective against air units without Ravage, because they have so few life points. Shadow damage spells are very useful against already weakened units or units with low live points in general. The Shadow Phoenix can respawn several times and the Soulshatter kills whole weakened armies. Aura of Corruption is quite expensive, but kills everything and is a perfect defense spell against expensive units.

b) Buffs

Buffs are good to cover the weaknesses of a unit. You can often counter them with cc-spells or with other buff spells. Buffs, especially the shadow buffs like Unholy Power or Life Weaving, are useful for the whole match, because they grant % damage reduction or % more damage for your units. So you can use them still in T3 and they get even better with the stronger units you use with them.

c) CC-Spells

You can take a group of units out of the game with cc-spells. They are useful to interrupt a strong ability, waiting until a buff or ability (shadow units) runs out or in combat with a large group of units. They are cost inefficient against only a very few unbuffed cheap units.

d) Other spells

Other spells like Retreating Circle have special uses. E.g. you can teleport your army under a Soulshatter away. Some frost spells like Glacier Shell, Shield Building or Kobold

Trick are very good in protecting your buildings. Glacier Shell/Shield Building are strong counters against abilities that damage buildings like the Trumpet of Virtuoso or the Ground Slam of Tremor.

5. Common Strategies

a) Harassment

This is a powerful tactic, especially in the beginning (more power for you, less for opponent), because you force your opponent to waste power. You just have to run with some fast unit to his base and he will get in trouble, spawn more or less useless units or even towers and walls. Then you just have to run back, and you've got more power. And can attack elsewhere.

Since you don't want to attack the point he wants to protect because you seem to attack this is good because he has no power for protecting the point you attack afterwards. Of course without losing your units at the well protected spot he keeps, just run around it.

The main idea of harassment is that you attack with a fast unit. If your opponent makes nothing you can destroy a well and gain a permanent power advantage. If he summons units, you try to avoid them and attack at another place. So often swift units are the only real counter to harassment strategies. Or you summon more units than he and then attack with all your units together. Another example for harassment are flying units like the Skyfire Drake. It is faster than archers, because he can fly over mountains and can retreat very fast.

b) One-unit-attacks

If you have enough power you can buff a unit, so it is strong enough to kill a well quickly or monument alone. Shadow buffs like Unholy power or Live Weaving are very common for one-unit-attacks. Often this strategy is combined with harassment. Counters are often cc-spells or summoning a counter unit and protect your building with a spell like Glacier Shell. Especially swift or very expensive units like the harvester or a supported mountaineer can be very strong when they are buffed.

c) Attacking with a large army

This is the most common strategy for most players. A large army can beat everything quite fast. But they are weak against cc-spells, damage spells and you often can't defend your own base if you have the large army at the wrong place. So good players often attack only with 3-4 units and support them with spells. E.g. you can attack in T2 with 3 Nightcrawlers, activate their frenzy ability and attack a well/monument. Before they die you can summon a shadow phoenix. He will resurrect and you can deal 4000 damage with him.

d) Orb one hit

Once you reach T3, you can destroy orbs in a matter of seconds. E.g. a Virtuoso with stacked Unholy Power, 3 Cultist Masters + Soulshatter, Tremors + Home Soil or a Juggernaut (ability) can "one hit" an orb or even the orb and 2 nearby wells. Then your opponent can only summon weaker units. The common counters against such a strategy are spells like glacier shell or to interrupt your opponents units with cc-spells like curse of oink.

Attention: cc-spells don't interrupt the Juggernauts ability, as they do with other unit abilities, like the War Eagle scream (just an example, useless for orb one hits). This seems to be a bug at the moment.

e) Tower Rush

The idea of the tower rush is that towers are stronger than normal units after they are build up. You can tower rush with frost or fire. Fire towers like the Mortar Tower or the Termite Hill can destroy wells/monuments very fast and have a high range. Frost towers are instead nearly indestructible after being build (Glacier shell + Kobold Trick) and have more life points. Often a tower rush is combined with cc-spells from nature. You have to destroy an offensive tower before it is built up, otherwise you often loose a match or get at least a big disadvantage. As a consequence you have to summon a siege unit or unit with a really high damage, like a Nightcrawler or Burrower or better use damage spells like Eruption or Nasty Surprise if your opponent uses a cc-spell. Frost and Nature can't counter good tower rushes. Shadow can have issues at some maps, too.

f) Wall Rush

The idea of the wall rush is that you try to build a wall near your opponent's base. If you can build it, then you can destroy the base with archers (they gain a defense bonus while standing at the wall) or build a long range tower behind it. If your opponent builds the wall, he has a permanent power disadvantage, because walls bind power. So he has to let a unit stay near the wall. The wall rusher can blow S-units away with hurricane. Counters are Burrowers, Ice Barriers (only for expensive walls) and summoning units near the wall (but that costs a lot of power and you should attack with these units after summoning them). At some maps you can use walls to restrict the opponent's movement.

g) Over-the-cliff-attacks

The idea of this strategy is to use the terrain. Long range units like White Rangers and buildings like Mortar Tower are often weak in close combat. So you can shoot over a cliff or mountain and have an advantage. Flying units can also retreat very fast over cliffs or mountains.

h) Wildfire – destroy Power Wells

Two good placed Wildfires (160 power) destroy two power wells and nearly a monument. You have to spend 150 power to repair the damage of one wildfire (80 power) damaging two power wells normally or 100 with Kobold Trick. If the wildfire affects more buildings e.g. two power wells and a monument it will be even worse for the defender. The best counter is to summon a Skyelf Templar that repairs your buildings.

6. Strengths and Weaknesses of the fractions

Fraction	Nature	Frost	Fire	Shadow
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Best cc-spells and abilities- Good “parasite”-cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Good spells to protect buildings- Good T1 Support units and a good AoE-buff (Home Soil)- Mountaineer and Lyrish Knight as great T2-units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Best Siege units- Very Strong Towers with a long range- very strong T1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Strong buffs- Quite strong and cheap units the whole match- Most dangerous damage spells
Weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Expensive T1-units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- No T1-Swift- Most units very	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- No cc-spells	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- No cc-spells- Weak without

	- Expensive T2-units and no M/M-unit - No Towerrushcounter	slow and without high damage (but a lot of live points) - No Towerrushcounter		upgrades
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7. Examples of good combinations and how to find them

There are some strong combinations between cards. Here are a few examples.

a) Mine

Mines deals a lot of damage (Two mines destroy two power wells and nearly a monument (2400 damage to several targets)) and is even very useful in T2. It has the following disadvantages:

- your opponent has to walk into the mine to trigger it
- your opponent can run away

To solve the first problem it is often enough to put the mine into the opponents walkway or hide it under a building. But good players can react often fast enough to avoid the mine (sometimes it is impossible to avoid the mine, because it appears directly under the swift unit). So you can play the cards like Hurricane or Lava Field (expensive) with an knock back effect to push your opponents units into the mine. The mine will trigger and deal a lot of damage. This can be very useful to destroy opponents orbs.

To solve the second problem you can play the card Ensnaring Roots. Then the opponents units cant move away.

b) Soulshatter

The spell Soulshatter has the condition that it deals 500 additional damage for each dying unit. The most common way to use it, is to use it on a weakened army or on units with only a few life points, like the most air units. Another way to use it, is to summon a lot of you own units that you kill after they are cursed with Soulshatter, but before the Soulshatter damages them. E.g. you can summon for 60 power a cultist master and two Nightcrawlers (ability). These 3 units are enough to deal 1500 additional damage. If you summon 3 Cultist Masters and play a Soulshatter, then this is enough to destroy an orb and two power wells.

c) Skyfire Drake + Unholy Power + other buff spells

The Skyfire Drake is strong in general. With ravage he beats even most anti-air units. If you combine Ravage with Unholy Power, he will receive 50% less damage and deals 50% more. So he will be nearly immortal during this buff. Killing two of your opponent's Skyfire Drakes is no problem. Other counters like spells don't work, because of the damage reduction. The only weakness of this combination is that it is very expensive and can be countered with cc-spells.

d) Finding your own combinations

There are two general types of good combinations. The first are cards which are strong in compliance with a condition. So you have find another card to fulfil the condition. The second are good cards in general that can be buffed. Often there are nice stacking effects. Just try a little bit in the sandbox and you will find a lot of nice combinations.

8. How to build your deck

Start with a random deck. If you want to start with a successful deck, look at ESL.eu → Battleforge. There you will find a lot of good decks.

After every match you loose, you should ask yourself:

Why I lost the match?

Which card would be a counter card against the opponents card?

Which cards are in my deck that I never use?

Then you are able to edit your deck and it will be finally better than every deck you copy, because you can't play with these decks as good as with your own deck, created with the experience of over a hundred matches.

9. Basic Micromanagement

-Use Hotkeys. They are important to react fast enough.

-Spread your units. So opponents spells are less effective against them.

-Use focus fire: Let all your (ranged) units attack the same opponent unit, so it dies very soon. But try to avoid wasted damage.

-Attack at multiple places. Many opponents are overstrained. It is especially effective against Nature (cc-spells) and Frost (building protection), because these strong spells can only protect one play at a time.

-Use abilities at the right time. Many units (especially shadow units) are only strong with their abilities.

-Use shadow unit's abilities on only a very few units at the same time. Otherwise your opponent will use a cc-spell and they will all die

-Charge multiple times in combat to deal additional damage. E.g. two raged giant slayers can kill an avatar of frost with one charge.



Here units stand right to each other, one spell can hit them all.



Here units stand far away from each other, one spell could only hit 2 of them.

10. Map specific tricks

Elyon: Destroy your wall to gain 25 additional void energy.

Attention: Your opponent will be able to build it up.

Yrmia: Destroy the wall to get 75 additional void energy.

Attention: Your opponent will be able to build your wall up if you are on the northern player.

On some maps, especially at Whazai, Fyre and Yrmia you can use the cliffs to attack with long-range-units/towers (e.g. mortar tower, termit hill, white rangers) very efficient.

On some other maps it is possible to save time by building powerwells over the cliffs.

11. Abbreviations

Buff:

A buff is a spell that makes a unit stronger for a while.

CC-Spell:

Crowd-control-spell, that takes unit out of the game for a while like ensnaring roots, curse of oink, coldsnap or frost shard.

T1, T2, T3, T4:

Tier 1/2/3/4 means that a player has 1/2/3/4 monuments or a card requires them.

PvP:

Player versus Player