

YOU SUCK

at MMOCCRTSGs

BUT

You Don't Have To

A



PvP guide by Circadia

Table of Contents

1. Who this guide is intended for.....	3
2. What to expect from Battleforge PvP	4
1. MT:G meets Dawn of War.....	4
2. The Fog Lifts	4
3. Victory Objectives.....	5
3. Reading Cards	6
1. Unit Cards	6
2. Building Cards	8
3. Spell Cards.....	9
4. More Information	10
4. Building a PvP Deck	11
1. The Four Elements	11
2. The Tier System	12
3. Deck Purity.....	12
4. Deck Interface	13
5. The Power System.....	14
1. Why you need power	14
2. Mechanics of the Power System.....	14
3. Practical Power Usage	17
4. Know your Income!.....	18
6. The Counter System.....	19
1. What is it?	19
2. Attack Type and Unit Size	19
3. Complex Counters.....	19
4. Counters and Power.....	21
7. The Playing Field	23
1. Layout of a Map.....	23
2. Point Control.....	23
3. Playing your Cards	24
4. Healing and Repair.....	29
8. Basic Strategies.....	32
1. Rushing	32
2. Harassment.....	33
3. One Unit Wonders	33
4. Infiltration.....	34
5. Wall Offense.....	35
6. Map Domination	35
7. Turtling	36
9. PvP Rewards.....	37
1. ELO and Rank.....	37
2. Tokens and Gold	38
3. Collection or Tome?	38
4. Upgrade System.....	38
10. Glossary of Terms	41
11. Acknowledgements	44

I

GUIDES? WE DON'T NEED NO STINKING GUIDES!

(Who this guide is intended for)

Battleforge is, to say the least, a multi-faceted game. It is, as far as I am aware, the first and only MMOCRTSG (Massively Multiplayer Online Collectible Card Real Time Strategy Game). Don't try to pronounce it. Players will be coming to the game with all manner of experience in its different composite parts, and to write a guide that caters for all of them in detail is impossible. But hey, doing the impossible is my thing, so here we go.

The full scope of this guide is meant, specifically, for the player who is somewhat experienced with Real Time Strategies (RTSs), vaguely familiar with Collective Card Games (CCGs) and completely new to Battleforge itself (this being the position I was in when I first started playing). If you are unfamiliar with RTSs I suggest you play a few games in PvE first to get a feel for the controls and interface, as much of what I describe will assume you are familiar with things like basic controls, navigation using the minimap, usage of the card-play interface and so on (all of which should be intuitive for an RTS-vet). If you are experienced in Battleforge PvE then much of this guide (the beginning sections especially) will largely repeat things you already know. I apologise for boring you in advance, but you want to be pro right? Yeah, I thought so.

This guide is specifically designed to be an aid and tutorial for 1v1 PvP. However, that is not to say that you will not garner some interesting insights about 2v2 PvP. All of the mechanics and win objectives remain the same, so it should not (I hope) be difficult to carry the necessary skills over. (Watch this space: if I ever start playing 2v2 religiously you may very well see a specific section for it on this guide. Or if someone wants to collaborate... Hint hint.)

This guide will not teach you how to abuse overpowered strategies. Over half the threads on the Battleforge forums are whines about one strategy or another which is "unbeatable", so go look there if that's all you want. On second thoughts, don't. Keep reading. This game is so conducive to a multitude of different playstyles, you don't want to be rehashing some tired old strategy just because it allows you to win, surely? Every playstyle is rewarding, every playstyle is viable if you play it right. Who knows, your deck may be the next flavour of the month.

What this guide will teach you will be how to apply what you already know about whatever background you have in games similar to Battleforge and turn it into something fun and competitively viable. I will outline the strengths and weaknesses of particular decks, the important mechanics and general things to consider when playing. Are you still reading? Good. I hope those guys who hopped over to the forums for the OP strategies die in a fire.

2

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THERE'S NO FOG OF WAR?

(What to expect from Battleforge PvP)

1. MT:G meets Dawn of War.

Battleforge is not like most RTS games. It is not as simple as picking a race/faction and playing the hell out of it until you figure out the counters to every other race/faction. There is an element of meta-strategy, wherein the CCG has a strong influence on the RTS, and vice versa. Having a multitude of cards gives you more and more options, and knowing what every card is capable of will be invaluable. Committing attack powers and hitpoints to memory is a necessity, so I suggest you start boning up now. You've got a lot of work ahead of you.

It is important to remember that however much the CCG affects the RTS, it is never the case that those who have the Ultra Rare cards will always win. Sure, the UR cards are great, but I've lost plenty of battles to someone using only Common and Uncommon. There are four rarities; Common, Uncommon, Rare and Ultra Rare. You won't start off with any of the latter in your basic decks, but you may get some in booster packs. You can trade to get any ones you are after. Visit www.bfcards.info; this is a great website for browsing the available cards and finding out who has what (and advertising your own needs/offers). There is an Auction House system for buying cards conveniently, but prices tend to be high so use it as a last resort.

2. The Fog Lifts

Even when considered purely as an RTS, Battleforge stands out from the crowd. **PvP matches have no Fog of War.** Madness, you might think. Madness? This is Battleforge! The surprise is all in the deck you play. Your opponent gets to see one card (the card that is first in your deck) as the game is about to begin, but other than that he's in the dark as to what you might play (as are you with him.) In most RTSs, as soon as you see the first unit you know what it is you are up against (sometimes even sooner than that if it reveals the faction in the lobby.) So be prepared for surprises. Don't ever assume you know exactly what your opponent is capable of, and don't ever throw all your cards on the table in one go (no pun intended.)

This makes keeping your eye on your opponent an absolute necessity to winning. Learn to switch back and forth regularly between your own machinations and your opponent's. The quicker you learn what you are up against, the quicker you can adapt. Those who can adapt can win. That's the entire principle of natural selection, remember, and it's why we're around to waste our time playing games and not the Neanderthals. Make your opponent a Neanderthal. You're a homo sapiens, act like one.

3. Victory Objectives

Winning in Battleforge PvP is, on the face of it, simple. There are no take and hold wins, there are no assassination objectives. There is you, there is your opponent, and thirty minutes of carnage. **Annihilation, complete and utter, is the only objective.** If you have no built monuments for one minute, you lose. If you have no ground units or buildings, you lose. If you quit the game in frustration because you know you're going to lose, then you lose (it's like in chess where the arrogant arses point out how their next few moves will inevitably result in their victory and you sit there racking your brains to see a flaw in their reasoning, and you give up because there's something good on TV.)

Alternatively, if you are both stubborn as mules and somewhat evenly matched, you may end up running out the clock. After thirty minutes, whoever has the highest score wins the game. Battleforge is a fast game. Most games will barely push fifteen minutes, let alone thirty. However, should this possibility become an inevitability, it is best to keep the scoring system in mind. Quite simply; whoever has spent more power wins. It's a stupid system, to be frank, but you should be aiming to finish a game quickly anyway. If Battleforge was a game of chess, it'd be speed chess. Speed chess played while on LSD.

If you would prefer not to see the words "YOU HAVE LOST" after every game, I suggest you stop being the annihilated and start being the annihilator. And that's why you're reading this guide. See, you've learnt something already.

3

SAY HELLO TO MY LITTLE FRIEND

(Reading Cards)

Cards come in three basic types; units, buildings and spells. Being familiar with the layout and operation of all types of card is the first step to being able to play Battleforge well. This section will deal the anatomy of a card and how to read it. Section 7.3 deals with the playing of cards in an actual match.

1. Unit Cards



Figure 1: Anatomy of a unit card

- **Power Cost:** The amount of usable power that is required to summon the unit.
- **Orb Requirements:** The colour of the orbs you must have in play to summon the unit. A filled-in circle denotes one orb of that colour, and a grey outline means an orb of any colour. In this case, the Fallen Skyelf needs two purple orbs and one orb of any other colour.
- **Charges:** The amount of times you can play this card before the card has to recharge. Recharge rates are different for every card, but higher tier cards tend to have longer cooldowns. Sometimes the charge reads like "5x6", which means there are 5 charges, and every charge creates a squad of 6 units. All small units and some medium units come in squads.
- **Race:** Race has little bearing on the mechanics of Battleforge. Two races are always aerial units; Sky Elves and Dragonkin. All other races are either ground units or divided between ground and aerial.

- **Class:** Refers to the general role that a creature plays in a match. See the table below for a list of the different classes.

Class	Role	Weakness
Archer(s)	Ranged damage	Weaker than comparable melee units
Corruptor	Debuffing enemy units	Weak attackers on their own
Crusader	High damage and support	Easy to kill with certain cards
Destroyer	Building/base destroyer	Susceptible to spells and Dominators
Dominator	High damage	Expensive power cost
Marauders	Gains power by attacking buildings	Weak or expensive
Soldiers	All-purpose mainstay unit	Has no specific role
Supporter	Heals/supports other units	High priority target
Wizard	Ranged damage with special abilities	Low health

Table 1: Unit Class Roles

- **Abilities:** There are four different types of ability, denoted by the symbol on the card.





Symbol	Type	How it works
	Passive	A permanent modification of the unit, usually granting it a buff in damage/resilience, or an extra ability.
	Auto-Cast	An ability which the unit uses as soon as the relevant (friendly or enemy) unit is in range. For ranged units, the damage done per shot will appear as an auto-cast ability.
	Activated	An ability which must be activated by the player before the unit will use it. Sometimes it will grant the unit a temporary buff, or give the unit a one-off special attack. Many activated abilities require the player to select a target unit or zone. Some activated abilities have a power cost.
	Toggled	An ability which can be toggled on or off. When on it usually grants the unit a buff in damage/resilience, or allows further abilities. However, it will often render the unit slower or even immobile while the ability is left on. Some toggled abilities have a power cost to turn on (but not off).

Table 2: Unit Ability Types

- **Attack Type:** The units attack type is denoted by either a symbol and a letter, or just a symbol. A sword means that the unit attacks in melee. A bow means they attack at ranged. (For ranged units, their effective attack range is generally unspecified, and so is best tested in the Forge.) A star means they possess a special attack, which can be either melee or ranged. The letter denotes the size of the unit that their attack is particularly effective against. S means they are effective against Small units, M for Medium units, L for Large and XL for Extra Large units; see section 6.2 for more information on this.
- **Attack Value:** This is a general number to allow you to easily compare cards to one another. It does not indicate a specific amount of damage that the unit deals. For melee units, they will generally achieve their attack value in damage after about 17 seconds from their first attack (if their damage has not been modified in some way). Ranged/special units don't follow this pattern, and their damage is best calculated using the numbers listed in their Auto-Cast ability, if they have one.

- **Rarity:** The rarity of the card, which denotes the likelihood of it appearing in a booster pack. It has no role on the RTS mechanics of the game, but it is worth keeping in mind the rarity of cards when attempting to build a deck, as it can affect their Auction House pricing and trade value.





Symbol	Rarity	Amount received in 6 Booster Packs	Odds of a specific card appearing in 1 Booster Pack
	Common	30	1:12
	Uncommon	12	1:30
	Rare	≈5	1:72
	Ultra Rare	≈1	1:120

Table 3: Card Rarity

- **Unit Size:** Denoted by the same lettering system as in the Attack Type. See section 6.2 for more information on what Unit Size means for the card.
- **Health:** The amount of damage a unit can take before it bites the dust. Units which are divided into squads have their total health divided amongst all members of the squad. Once units drop below a certain amount of health, members of the squad will die, which will permanently reduce the unit's total damage (unless you use a card which heals your units, thereby resurrecting the dead members of the squad.)

2. Building Cards

The layout of a building card is very similar to that of a unit card. Therefore I won't reiterate any aspects of building cards which are exactly the same as on unit cards.



Figure 2: Anatomy of a building card

- **Class:** Building classes are less clearly defined than unit classes, but there are some general resemblances between buildings of the same class.

Class	Role
Barrier	Support: forward position
Device	Support: self-destructing bombs, teleportation and power boosters
Fortress	Attacks units: mass destruction, offensive/defensive powerhouse
Hut	Support: generally close range support
Shrine	Support: generally global support
Tower	Attacks units: cheap and plentiful.

Table 4: Building Class Roles

- **Attack Value:** Towers and (most) fortresses will have an attack value, but they do not affect different sized units differently; their damage is always the same. As with ranged units, the best way to find out the actual amount of damage that the tower does is to check the numbers that appear in the tower's Auto-Cast ability. All other building classes will not have an attack value as they act in a support capacity.

3. Spell Cards

Again, spell cards are very similar to other kinds of cards, but noticeably lack health and attack value. Their only function is to carry out the effect of spell.



Figure 3: Anatomy of a Spell Card

- **Class:**

Class	Role
Arcane	Buffing and healing own units
Enchantment	Global spell; does not directly affect any unit
Spell	Debuffing and damaging enemy units

Table 5: Spell Class Roles

- **Spell Effect:** Carries out the effect described. For more information on how to play a spell card and maximise the effectiveness of its effect, see section 7.3.

4. More Information

For more information on abilities and other characteristics a card might have, simply mouse over it until the information appears. A building that possesses Rapid Construction or Slow Movement often won't have this listed in their abilities; it only appears when you mouse over the card, below the name.

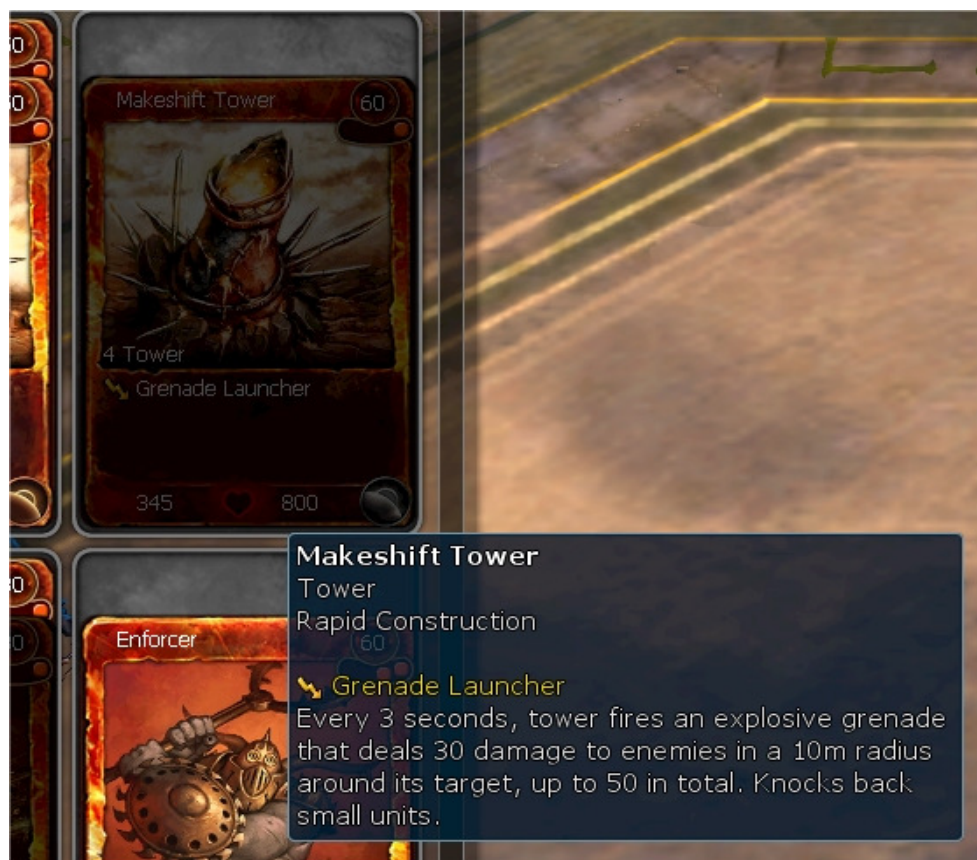


Figure 4: Further Information on Cards

4

RED WITH ANGER, GREEN WITH ENVY, BLUE WITH COLD, PURPLE WITH... ASPHYXIATION?

(Building a PvP Deck)

There are 200 cards in Battleforge and 4 factions (henceforth referred to as “elements” or “colours”), which makes 50 cards per faction. Each deck is comprised of a maximum of 20 cards, with no duplicates. Which means at any one time you will be using only one tenth of the available units in the game. The chances of you having exactly the same deck as your opponent are therefore similar to the Drake equation (trillions to one.) Thus building a good deck is absolutely key to being a Battleforge Battlemaster.

Herein lies the problem. I cannot tell you what makes a good deck. There is no secret. Every card can be useful if used right. The question you have to ask is what kind of style of play do you want? In any other game, this would be as simple as picking the correct race for your preferred playstyle but, as I’m sure you have realised, it is not as simple in Battleforge (it never is). The three things to consider are **(1)** the composite colour(s) of your deck, **(2)** the tier system and **(3)** the “purity” of your deck.

1. The Four Elements

Colour (Element)	Strengths	Weaknesses
Red (Fire)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerful units • Fast and offensive • High damage spells • Long-range siege 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few defensive options • No crowd control • Expensive units
Blue (Frost)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best structures • Abilities to shield units/buildings • Crowd control • High health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of swift units • Lack of siege units • High level of micromanagement required
Purple (Shadow)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerful buffs • Control of void power and corpses • High damage spells • Cheap units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacrifices and risks involved • Units relatively fragile • No crowd control
Green (Nature)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healing • Crowd control • Manoeuvrability • Anti-Magic Fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive units • Little instant damage • High level of micromanagement required

Table 6: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Four Elements

Choose an element (or elements) which suit the sort of playstyle you most enjoy; don't listen to anyone who tells you that you must use this colour if you want to be good. **Every element is viable, if you play it right.**

Whatever you do, don't read this table as outlining hard and fast rules for how the colours should be played. Frost, for example, has some brilliant offensive units, and Fire has traps and devices which can be used as an *ad hoc* defense. Play about with your units in the Forge or play some practice battles in the Sparring Grounds in order to find for yourself how each element plays. What this table outlines is how each colour is designed to be played, but some of the more successful strategies in Battleforge PvP have arisen from people using their colours in weird, often unintentional, ways. Don't be afraid to experiment.

2. The Tier System

The tier system of Battleforge revolves around the building of monuments. The first monument is free, the second costs 150, the third costs 250 and the fourth costs 400. Each monument houses an orb of a particular colour, and each successive orb allows you to use more (and better) cards. Each card requires at least one orb of a particular colour to be playable, and most will require more orbs of either the same colour as the first or any other colour. The total numbers of orbs required denotes the tier of the card.

How many cards should you have per tier? This is a difficult question to answer, but I would argue that most playstyles require **a strong t2 above all else**. It is fairly easy to get to t2 on most maps, but getting t3 will be a headache if you don't have a strong and versatile t2. **Do not neglect t1**, however, as many players favour an early rush style, and if they reach you before your second orb is built they may very well destroy your first orb unless you are able to defend it.

Regarding tier 4, there is little to no point in having it in PvP. While useful in PvE, the fast paced nature of PvP in Battleforge means battles are often won in t2 or t3; sometimes even t1. The 400 power cost of a fourth orb is better spent on more t3 cards. One strategy which some players use is with the card Enlightenment, which allows you to summon a unit without regard for orb requirements. The power cost for this strategy is similarly obscene, so if you opt to use this strategy make sure your t4 unit will wreak sufficient havoc to justify its cost.

3. Deck Purity

The "purity" of the deck refers to the ability to mix and match colours. Cards which have uncoloured orb requirements are conducive to mixed decks; cards which require several same-colour orbs are conducive to pure decks. There are benefits and weaknesses to having both pure and mixed decks, which I shall outline briefly. **Pure decks, on the whole, tend to allow better cards earlier on.** This is most noticeable at tier 2 (t2), where having two fire orbs unlocks the brilliant Enforcer/Firedancer cards, and two shadow orbs unlocks the earliest-available Extra Large (XL) unit, the Harvester. However, sticking with the same colour orbs tends to emphasise the weaknesses of that element.

Many (most) players opt for **mixed colours**, which **allow for a more adaptable deck**, wherein you can offset the weaknesses of your other colours (for example, you can lengthen the lifespan of Shadow's fragile units with Nature's healing). Always remember, your ability to play these cards is reliant on claiming the necessary orbs, so make sure your deck is playable at every tier.

I hope this has helped you in deciding what kind of deck you want to build. If you are still looking for specifics on which cards to pick, read chapter 6, as it will offer some more advice in the context of game mechanics.

4. Deck Interface

To build a deck, just click New at the bottom left of your screen while on the Forge. You will have to specify if you want to create a Collection Deck or a Tome Deck. Tome Decks require you to possess 6 unopened booster decks (a "Tome".) Collection Decks allow you to use any cards currently in your possession. Call your deck something memorable and interesting, but try not to make it too obvious. (I see plenty of decks called "Fire/Frost PvP" and already I know a lot more about them than they do about me.)

Make your card layout intuitive and ordered. This will quickly get you into the habit of finding the card you need, when you need it, which is crucial when you're in a hectic fight and every second counts. Here is my deck layout:

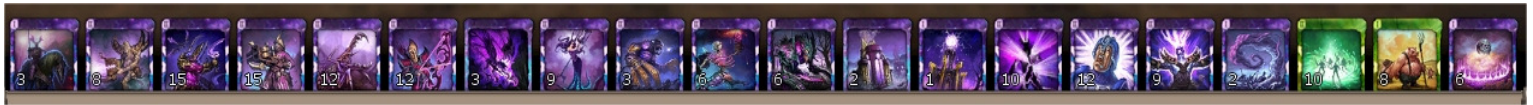


Figure 5: Circadia's PvP Deck Layout

All my units are to the left of the deck, followed by buildings and then spells on the right. Within these divisions they are also organised by tier, and within their tiers they are also organised by colour (although this deck only has two green.) Find a system which works for you and stick to it. If you make changes to your deck, you will grow accustomed to them faster if you have a discernible system.

To make changes to a deck just select it (click "Decks" at the bottom left and then select the one you want) and click the padlock button next to the name. This will allow you to remove cards (right click), move cards around (left click and drag) and add new ones (open the Cards window and drag the card you want into a free slot.)

You can also clone pre-existing decks (via the Decks window), which is useful if trying a new strategy with only slightly different cards.

5

YOU MUST CONSTRUCT ADDITIONAL WELLS

(The Power System)

1. Why you need Power

Power is the only gatherable resource in Battleforge, and control of it is the key to winning. This is the best way to think about power; as something that must be controlled, wrestled from the enemy, protected and used efficiently. You are as good as your power flow, and your power flow is as good as you. There's a mantra for you to repeat to yourself.

More power means more units faster. More power also means more monuments, and more monuments means better cards. So power literally is everything. On the whole, you should be looking to at least equal, and often better, your opponent's own power income. Such a position is called "power advantage" and if you can maintain such an advantage then you are well placed to win.

2. Mechanics of the Power System

If you check your interface, you'll see five yellow numbers on the left-hand side of your minimap.

- The big number is your current Usable Power (**UP**). This is the power you can (surprise surprise!) currently use.
- The topmost number (inside the skull) is your Void Power (**VP**), which is the left-over power from dead cards and played spells. This slowly trickles into your UP.
- The bottommost number (inside the well) is your Gatherable Power (**GP**), which is the total power available to be gathered by your wells.
- The number in between your UP and VP (inside the grey arrow) is your current Void Power Income (**VPI**), which will always be your current void power divided by 50 and rounded to the nearest whole number. (So the more void power you have, the faster you gain it.)
- The number in between your UP and GP (inside the blue arrow) is your Gatherable Power Income (**GPI**). This will be equivalent to the number of wells you own.

GPI and VPI are measured in power per 2 seconds. So a GPI of 2 means your UP will increase by 1 power every second, and your GP will decrease by the same.



Figure 6: Power Interface

In the above picture the player has 378 VP. Dividing by 50 and rounding gives you a VPI of 8, or 8 power every 2 seconds. This means in the next second, the VP will drop to 374 and thus the VPI will drop to 7. The player has a GPI of 5, which means he has 5 wells (a quick way to check). This gives a total power income of 13, which means the UP will increase by 6.5 every second. The player's GP (the total amount of power left in his wells) is 4083.

UP, VP, and GP are three of the six states of power. The other three are as follows:

- **Additional Power (AP)** is power pulled out of nowhere, such as from Resource Booster or the Looting ability on Thugs and Strikers, or else it is stolen from your opponent's GP, via the Energy Parasite card. AP is immediately transferred to UP, so it is more a form of income than an actual state of power.
- **Bound Power (BP)** is best thought of as potential power that exists in the playing field, in the form of units and buildings. When you play a unit or building card, its power cost is "bound" to the unit on the map, and exists in this state so long as the unit or building is still alive. It is power in your system, but unable to be used and requires an action (sacrifice) on your behalf to transfer it.
- **Lost Power (LP)** is power which cannot be regained in any way, and is useless to you. You want as little LP as possible.

There is no easy way to monitor any of these three, but always try to keep in mind how your levels compare to your opponents, the BP especially.

The following diagram outlines the flow of power from one state to another.

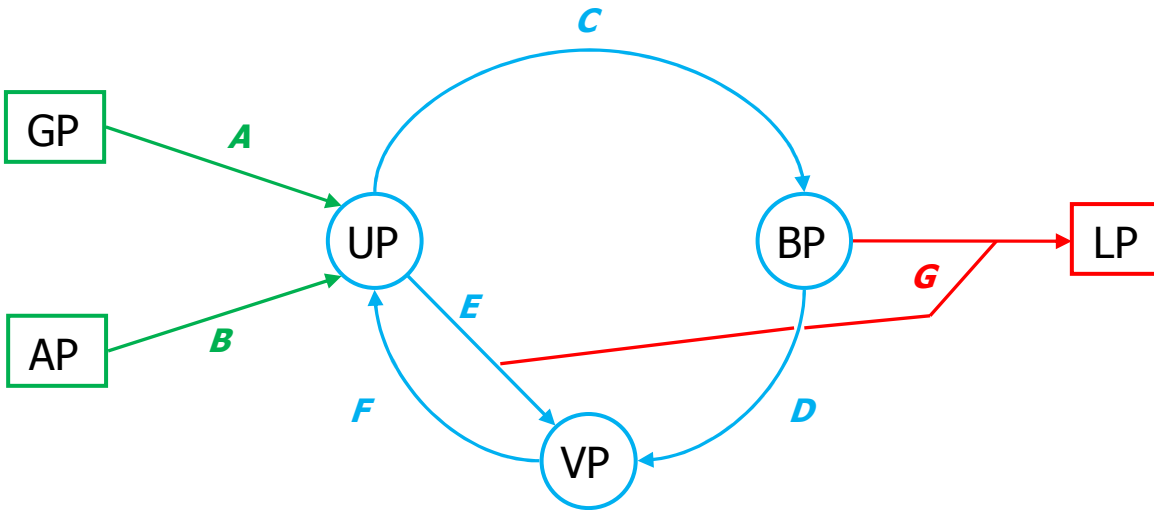


Figure 7: Power Flow

- (A)** Power gathered from wells transfers from your GP to your UP.
- (B)** Power gathered by additional means transfers from your AP to your UP.
- (C)** Playing a unit/building card or building a monument/well “binds” power on the field, thus transferring power from UP to BP.
- (D)** When a unit dies or a building is destroyed, a certain percentage of its BP transfers to your VP.
- (E)** Playing a spell, unit ability or repairing a building directly transfers a percentage of its cost from your UP to your VP.
- (F)** Power slowly transfers from your VP to UP.
- (G)** Whatever power is left over from transfers *D* and *E* is transferred into your LP.

Power is **gained** from green transfers A and B, **cycles** around the system via the blue transfers C, D, E and F and is finally **lost** via the red transfer G.

The following table illustrates the percentage of power which is transferred into VP/LP in transfers *D* and *E*, depending on which action initiates the transfer.

Transfer	Action	Amount transferred to VP	Amount transferred to LP
<i>D</i>	Unit dies	90%	10%
	Building is destroyed	90%	10%
	Power Well is destroyed	0%	100%
	Monument is destroyed	0%	100%
<i>E</i>	Spell card is played	90%	10%
	Activated Ability is used	90%	10%
	Toggled Ability is used	100%	0%
	Building Repair	100%	0%

Table 7: Lost Power in Transfers

3. Practical Power Usage

Phew! I realise that's a lot of information, so let's use practical examples to demonstrate how it all works.

Example 1. You start the game with a certain amount of UP, GP and VP. This means your UP will be steadily increasing at the combined rate of your GPI/VPI. You begin by playing a Nox Trooper. This costs 50 power, so 50 power is bound to the Nox Trooper and taken out of your UP. You march forward and take a power well. This binds 100 power to the power well. Your GP increases as you now have a new power source to gather from, and your GPI increases by 1.

Your enemy also takes a well and rushes his first unit towards you: a Scavenger. You decide to use your Nox Trooper's Overload ability which costs 40 power. This transfers 90% of the cost straight into your void power, so you lose 36 power from your UP and it is transferred into your VP. The remaining 4 power is transferred to LP. Your VP is now higher, and so your VPI also increases. Just as you fire off the Overload (killing the Scavenger), your opponent counters with an Eruption spell, which kills your Nox Trooper. The BP of the Nox Trooper is released. 90% of it (45 power) goes into your void power. 10% (5 power) goes into your LP, which means so far you have lost 9 power which you can never recover. However, your opponent's Eruption spell cost 80 power and his scavenger cost 60; 10% of both these costs is transferred into his LP. He has lost 14 power to your 9, and so you have more total power in your system. Advantage you! (It's a tiny advantage, but such tiny advantages aggregate over the course of the game.)

If your opponent were then to run over and attack your well, successfully destroying it (unlikely at this stage in the game, but possible), then all 100 of the BP will transfer into LP. Your GP will drop by however much Gatherable Power was left in the well, and your GPI will drop by 1. This will put you at a serious disadvantage.

Example 2. You begin by playing a Swiftclaw, transferring 80 power from UP to BP. This time you are on a small map, so you decide to press forward and attack early without building a well. Your opponent has built a Frost Sorceress and takes a well meaning he has transferred a total of 160 power from his UP to his BP. Thus you will have 80 more UP than him, but he has a higher GPI due to his well. You reach his well and play a squad of Windreavers, transferring 70 power from UP to BP. You kill his Frost Sorceress first and so he gains 54 power in VP and loses 6 power to LP.

You now have two units, and he has 0, so you begin attacking his well. Once he has gained enough power from GPI/VPI, he places down a squad of Imperials. However, you have gained a similar amount of power (but slightly less due to his higher GPI/VPI). You play the Ensnaring Roots spell to root the Imperials in place for a short time, and immediately gain 54 power in VP but lose 6 to LP. Your Windreavers attack the Imperials while your Swiftclaw continues to attack the well. Your Swiftclaw manages to destroy the well (again, it wouldn't happen this quickly, but it works as an example.) Your opponent loses 100 power to LP and he also loses his GPI advantage.

Because your opponent built a well prematurely, he had a lot more unusable BP, and so you possessed an immediate advantage in UP. This means that you can place down more units than he can, thus initiating a successful attack. However, if he had managed to defend his well for long enough such that it gained more power than it binds, (1 power every 2 seconds means it needs 200 seconds to do this) then he would have more power than you in his cycle, even if you managed to destroy it. This means he will possess the advantage.

These examples should help to illustrate the two key points about practical power usage. To make them plain and simple:

1. **You need to maximise the amount of power in your UP-BP-VP cycle.** Gather as much power as possible from GP and AP, while minimising your losses to LP. More power in your cycle means more of everything else; cards in play, monuments, wells, spells, abilities, etc.
2. **Your army is only as good as your UP.** Maximise it by increasing your GPI/VPI. Build wells to increase the former, and sacrifice unnecessary units/buildings to transfer their BP into VP for the latter. A fluid power cycle is just as important as one with tons of power.

If you can fulfil both of these better than your opponent, then you will have a power advantage, and victory will most likely be yours. Remember, you have to consider both. If you fulfil 1 and neglect 2 you may end up with lots of bound power in useless units and wells which haven't covered their own cost, and your opponent can use his advantage in non-bound power to beat you (as is demonstrated in example 2). If you fulfil 2 and neglect 1, you may end up losing lots of power through dead units and expensive spells, (as shown in example 1).

Here are some tips regarding wells:

- Make sure before you build a power well that it will survive long enough to pay for its own cost (200 seconds). If it doesn't, you have essentially thrown away power.
- Conversely, if you decide to attack an opponent's newly-built well while at a GPI disadvantage, try and destroy it before it covers its own cost. Make your opponent throw away his power!
- If attacking a well, make sure you won't end up losing more power from your cycle via dead units than he will lose for a lost well.
- Repairing a well can cost up to 150 power, and so many people believe it is better to sacrifice a nearly dead well and rebuild in another place. However, as shown in Fig. x, the entire repair cost is transferred into VP, whereas a destroyed well means 100 power will vanish from your cycle. The extra cost of repairing a damaged well is worth it to keep the power in your cycle.

4. Know your income!

Knowing how much power you are getting every second from VPI/GPI means you can estimate when you will be able to play your cards. Battleforge is like good comedy; timing is everything. If you can anticipate what your opponent is going to do *and when he is going to do it*, then turning the tables becomes as easy as pie.

For example; if your opponent is approaching your base with a big unit, knowing whether or not you will have enough UP to counter it when it arrives will be the difference between a good play or a bad play. If you won't have enough UP, then a futile defence will only waste what power you do have – a retreat and rebuild is the better move. However, if you will have enough UP then you can surprise your opponent with a massive influx of units or some trick spells, and bring the unit down before he knows how to react.

6

DEAR DEVELOPERS, PLEASE NERF ROCK. PAPER IS FINE. THX, SCISSORS

(The Counter System)

1. What is it?

The counter system is, as the above quote indicates, similar to the game Rock/Paper/Scissors. The principle is that every unit is capable of being successfully countered by another unit. While there are certain mechanics in place to help you figure out some basic counters, most of this is determined by players who experiment, testing out different counters and seeing how they work theoretically and practically.

You can test some possible counters just using the Forge (it's a great way to spend your time while waiting for a match.) Playing about with cards and finding out what is effective against what is the best way of learning for yourself how to play the game. When building your deck, keep the counter system in mind things into consideration. Ask yourself with every card: what will this counter, and what will counter this? Hey, yet another mantra for you to enjoy!

2. Attack Type and Unit Size

The primary way in which the counter system manifests itself in Battleforge is in the Attack Type/Unit Size mechanic. See section 3.1 for how to find a unit's Attack Type and Size.

The unit's Attack Type corresponds to the unit size which they are especially effective against; either S for Small, M for Medium, L for Large and XL for Extra Large. (Note: special attacks are not especially effective any units, hence the lack of letter.)

Units attacking an enemy unit of the size they are effective against will deal 50% more damage, which is a hugely significant amount. It is advised that you have at least one or two counters for every unit size in your deck, or else you may find certain units difficult to kill.

3. Complex Counters

The counter system is complicated by several mechanics which must be taken into consideration. The first of these is the element of **knockback**. Certain spells and attacks cause knockback which render the units unable

to attack for a few seconds. A good player can use this to keep units locked down completely. Small units are especially susceptible to knockback, but some units can knockback medium units too. Large units can literally walk through small units, causing them to be knocked back, and Extra Large units can do this to small and medium units. This can be a good way of reducing the damage temporarily on your large units, which is useful as they will often be the focus of your opponents fire (big unit = big target).

Buildings are easily countered by **siege** units. These do extra damage to buildings (50-100% more), and some (fire especially) have huge range which makes it easy to do damage to an enemy base from afar. Other siege units have abilities which assist them in attacking the enemy base, such as the Burrower who can do massive damage to a wall section with his Acid Spit ability, and the Harvester who can summon three units of Skeleton Warriors to deal with your enemy's defences while your Harvester focuses on their base.

The next thing to consider is **aerial units**. Aerial units can only be damaged by ranged units, or XL units. Remember that Aerial units can fly over and to otherwise inaccessible places on the map like atop cliffs and so on, which makes them difficult to hit, so having several ranged options is beneficial. Aerial units tend to have low HP, so ranged units with high damage make a good counter.

Bufs can also make a unit difficult to counter. A buff gives an ability to a unit that increases its strength or sturdiness. In some cases this won't be enough to overcome your forces, but if it is, a good counter is to use a crowd control spell like Oink! or Cold Snap, which are often cheaper than buffs. The buff will usually outlast the crowd control, but it will reduce the time where the unit is attacking while the buff is active, giving your units a better chance of survival. If you do not have crowd control, you can attempt to "kite" the unit by attracting him with another unit so that he gives chase, and then running out of range. Obviously this will not work if the buffed unit is attacking your static buildings, so always be prepared to kill a buffed unit if necessary.

Damage spells which affect multiple units can be an effective way to counter a **mass of units**. Spells like Eruption, Parasite and Soulshatter are examples of this kind of counter. They tend to be quite expensive, so consider using them only when you can ensure that it will be cost effective (see section 6.4) for more on issues of cost.) Note that many units and buildings also have attacks which affect a multiple amount of units, but can be more unwieldy than a well-placed spell. XL units with melee, for example, can hit multiple units with a single attack, but it is difficult to position such a unit to maximise his damage.

Countering a unit which is being **constantly healed** can be tough, but one thing to consider is mixing burst-damage units with consistent-damage units. The former are the sorts of units which do high damage, but only on occasion, like Shadow Mage's slow-casting Soulburn, or Enforcer's charge. The latter are the sorts of units which do small damage but quickly. Attacking an enemy unit with both of these means his health will begin to trickle down slowly, before dropping radically when the burst damage hits. This works best against heals which work periodically like Ravage or the Ashbone Pyro's Lifestealing ability, where the consistent damage negates the effect of the healing, and the burst damage drops the units health dramatically, at intervals, making it more and more difficult to keep the unit alive. This tactic can also make things more difficult for burst heals like Surge of Light, as the erratic health loss make judging when best to heal a unit tricky (healing too early will result in wasted health, healing too late and burst damage may finish the unit off.)

You can also apply this same strategy to **buildings being constructed**. Since a building is essentially “healing itself” while under construction, mixing burst-fire units with consistent-fire units will almost certainly destroy a building before it finishes constructing, if attacked early enough.

4. Counters and Power

As you have probably guessed, Counters and Power inform each other greatly. A counter isn’t really a counter if it costs 6 times more power than the thing it’s supposed to counter, is it? Lots of terms are thrown about regarding what to call counters that are cheaper than the strategy they are countering. Here I’ll outline a fairly simplistic and (dare I say it?) elegant way of talking about types of counters.

- **Soft counters** are counters which do not always work. Though they will almost always work under ideal circumstances, your opponent may use healing, buffing or crowd control to change the odds in his favour. For example, a squad of Wrathblades with their Burnout enabled will always beat a squad of Windreavers in a fair fight, which means they are a counter to Windreavers. However, the Nature player may use Ensnaring Roots on the Wrathblades which prevents them from getting into melee combat with the Windreavers; thus they are only a soft counter. Almost all counters are soft counters, as the general principle is that every card has its counter. A particular soft counter may be “harder” than another soft counter, in that it might be more difficult to counter or may work in more situations, but an actual “hard counter” is a very different thing.
- **Hard counters** are counters which always work. They are, essentially, un-counterable counters. These tend to be very situational. A Soulshatter will always counter massed low-health units. A crowd control spell is a hard counter for units which have a death countdown (such as Nightcrawlers with their Frenzy activated.) A Burrower’s Acid Spit will always knock archers off walls and render them unusable for several seconds, making them a hard counter for lots of archers on walls.
- **Efficient counters** are counters which cost the same or less power than the strategy they are countering. Efficient counters are obviously desirable as they allow you to maintain a high level of power in your cycle, and less UP is required to pull the counter off. The above example of using Wrathblades as a counter to Windreavers is an example of an efficient counter; the Wrathblades will win, yet cost 20 less power than the Windreavers.
- **Inefficient counters** are counters which cost more power than the strategy they are countering (no prizes for figuring that out.) While generally to be avoided, they are sometimes necessary. For example, it may be necessary for a player with a Nature orb to keep a powerful unit like a Harvester permanently crowd controlled using a rotation of Ensnaring Roots and Oink! A Harvester costs 300, and each rotation costs 100+ power, so three rotations will make it an inefficient counter (not to mention the fact you need to summon units to kill it eventually). However, this may give the Nature player the time to wreak havoc with his offensive force, thus making the counter worth it in the long run. Relying on inefficient counters is a sure fire way to lose, but knowing when and where they are useful is advisable.

Efficiency plays a large role in the degree of a counter's "hardness" (though it doesn't actually define it, as some people would argue.) If you play an extremely efficient counter, then your opponent has the choice of spending more power attempting to counter your counter or conceding the battle. If he is unable (or thinks he is unable) to force you to spend more power such that it negates the efficiency of your first counter, then he is unlikely to attempt to counter it; it would be a waste of valuable usable power for him (unless, as suggested before, it is necessary or desirable to use an inefficient counter to benefit another aspect of his game play.) The more efficient a counter, the more difficult it is for your opponent to justify spending more power to counter it, and thus it approaches being an un-counterable counter. However, since your opponent retains the choice of countering if and when necessary, it cannot be considered a truly hard counter.

The Wrathblades/Windreavers example emphasises this sort of judgement call. Suppose the Windreavers are attacking the Shadow player's power well. The Shadow player counters with Wrathblades. The Nature player has to decide whether or not to cast roots so he can continue attacking without worrying about the Wrathblades. If he does, he has forced the Shadow player to spend more power on units to kill the Windreavers, as otherwise he risks damage and destruction of his base. The Shadow player, however, will probably use a unit like Forsaken, which only costs 50 power, meaning he has still spent less than the Nature player. If the Nature player knows this is how the Shadow player will react, the better option will be to retreat, or he risks losing the Windreavers. Thus while the Wrathblades initially seemed like a fairly easily unit to counter, their efficiency in countering the Windreavers makes them "harder".

7

THIS MAP AIN'T BIG ENOUGH FOR THE BOTH OF US

(The Playing Field)

1. Layout of a Map

Maps on Battleforge consist of several features. As in any RTS game, the first thing you'll see when the match starts is your **base**. This consists of a monument and 2 wells (except on the 1v1 map Wazhai and the 2v2 map Fyre, where you start with 3 wells). Sometimes you will have a prebuilt wall. To move units beyond your wall, select the gate and press the open button.

Look around the rest of the map, and you will see square foundations upon which you can build monuments and wells (denoted on the minimap by small grey diamonds and big grey squares, respectively.) Often they are grouped together. A group of foundations (including groups of one) is called a **point**, and these are of vital strategic importance to both you and your opponent.

You will also see long thin foundations in the ground, which make squares or cross valleys. On the minimap this will look like a line of small grey squares. These are the foundations for **walls**. The presence or lack of walls on a map can completely change the way a game is played. Some maps have wall foundations at almost every pass, such as on Lajesh, and others have no wall foundations at all, such as on Haladur.

Walls are important defensive tools, primarily because they slow your enemies approach to your points, and because they allow small ranged units to stand on the battlements and fire down on opponents. Units on walls cannot be attacked by melee units, and they enjoy a 75% reduction in damage taken from spells and ranged units. The battlement segments of walls have 2500 health, and the gate segments have 2000 health. Walls build instantly. Use this to your advantage. Do not be tempted to build walls wherever and whenever you can, however. They are bound power, and only useful if they afford you an immediate benefit. Don't be afraid to destroy a wall that is no longer benefitting you in any way.

The **terrain** will also vary from map to map, but there is always an underlying symmetry. This is to prevent one player from having an inherent terrain advantage at the very start of the game. Terrain features include cliffs, ridges, and (on Yrmia) lakes, which are impassable by all except flying units. All other units must walk around such features. Ranged units can shoot from cliffs, and they can also shoot units on top of cliffs. This makes them invaluable, both for attacking your enemy from the safety of a cliff, and for defending from such an attack.

2. Point Control

The, claiming, taking and holding of points is the bread and butter of a Battleforge match. At any one time during a match, you can guarantee you will either be taking a point from an enemy, defending one of your

points from an attack, or choosing to expand by claiming a new point. Often you will be doing several of these at once, and at the higher ranks such multi-tasking is a necessity.

In order to build a new well or a monument, you must have a ground unit near a foundation, and there must be no enemy ground units nearby. In doing so, you then **claim** that point, as you now maintain a static presence of bound power there. The enemy cannot build there so long as your ground units and buildings (including wells and monuments) remain alive. Some points, such as those on Haladur, have their power well foundations sufficiently spread out such that building on one will not prevent the enemy from building on the other. Be wary of this when taking points on such maps, and use it to your advantage if you feel you are able.

It is useful to know the differing ways in which monuments and power wells build. Power wells build instantaneously, as soon as you click the button to create one (and have the necessary 100 UP), and will immediately add to your GP/GPI. Monuments, on the other hand, take time to build. Once you select the colour you want the orb to be, the monument will appear with 300 health and gain 45 health every half-second. It will take 30 seconds for a monument to finishing building and become usable. Thus a power well is usually the best choice for claiming a point quickly, unless you want to rush to the next tier.

To **take** a point, you must destroy all your enemy's ground units and buildings in that area. This will allow you to build upon the foundations, thereby claiming the point as your own. You do not necessarily have to claim the point after taking it; if you are merely finishing off your opponent then building another power well may be a waste of power that is best spent on offensive units (unless he is deliberately claiming points to prolong the game).

To **hold** a point, you must keep at least one ground unit alive at the point all the time. This is best done with wells and monuments, for reasons you shall see in the next section. Any unit will do, however. So long as any ground presence is maintained in the area, then the point remains yours, since your opponent cannot claim it for his own. Monuments will fire upon enemy units, but the damage is very low (only 20 damage every few seconds). Don't rely on monuments alone to hold a point.

Paying attention to your enemy's movements is necessary to hold points successfully. If you are constantly anticipating his moves, you stand a better chance of being prepared when he arrives. Always listen out for audio cues from the announcer, who will tell you if one of your monuments or power wells is under attack. Sometimes it's just easy to miss a single unit or two running to a point that's out of the way of the main battlefield, so perform regular checks on your points via the minimap to ensure they are safe.

The claiming, taking and holding of points is necessary for two reasons. The first is obvious; since points consist of wells and/or monuments, and we have already established their usefulness is maintaining an advantage over your opponent, the more points you hold then the more wells and monuments you can build. The second reason is a direct corollary; the more points you have, the less your opponent can possibly have.

This means that, on the whole, it is better to have more points spread out across the map than a few points which have been heavily built up. Sometimes this is simply not possible due to lack of manoeuvrability or your enemy's presence at other points. However, some strategies rely on fewer, heavily built points to be successful (see chapter 8 for information on specific strategies).

3. Playing your cards

If point control is the bread and butter of Battleforge, then your cards are the spreading knife. Without them, you wouldn't be able to take a single point. So don't take them for granted, and use them well.

To summon a unit, place a building or cast a spell, simply click the relevant card and click the area where you want to play it. You can play a card so long as you have a ground unit nearby (note: walls do not count as ground units for this, nor do monuments/buildings that are still under construction). The summoning of your units and buildings is also affected by the presence of enemy buildings (including monuments, wells and walls) which have a red aura around them when you try to play a card. Spells, however, are not restricted in the same way, and they also have a much longer castable range than summoning units or buildings. Use this to your advantage; you can damage or crowd-control enemy units long before they reach your units/base with a spell.

Summoning a unit next to a well or a monument will mean that they begin with full health, and their activated/toggled abilities will be immediately usable. Summoning a unit next to any other ground unit will result in them having Summoning Sickness (**SS**) for 15 seconds. They will begin at half health, deal only 50% of normal damage and be unable to use their activated abilities until the SS wears off. (Note that damage modifiers and passive abilities still apply.) Once SS wears off, they will gain half their health, meaning if they had lost no health during their period of SS, they would now be at full health. It is worth noting that if a squad unit has taken sufficient damage such that members of the squad have died during the period of SS, then they will not heal half the total health once it alleviates, but rather half the health of all surviving members of the squad. Thus such units are especially susceptible to SS. Some abilities, such as those possessed by the Wrecker and the Rallying Banner, allow units summoned near them to forgo SS and will start at full health.

Fighting at your enemy's orb and summoning creatures is generally ill-advised due to the advantage your enemy possesses; his units will not have SS, but yours will. However, if you feel sure you have a significant UP advantage (such as you would have after your opponent has built a well or monument) then you can use your advantage to overwhelm your opponent with superior numbers of units. This may also work if you are able to heal your units, but without a UP advantage this too will be difficult.

If defending from an attack where your enemy is summoning creatures who then have SS, try to focus your fire on those units. If you take them out before they gain the rest of their health then (a) they will be unable to use their special abilities and (b) it will be one less unit to worry about; a unit on half health will die quicker than a unit with full health. Remember though, they only deal 50% damage so if a unit without SS is close to dying, it might be advisable to kill that unit first to drastically reduce the amount of incoming damage.

Placing a building is similar to summoning a unit, except they always have a construction period where they gain health over a period of time. Different buildings build at different rates, as the following table demonstrates:

Building	Starting Health as % of total	% of total health gained per half second	Time to build
Shrine/Barrier with Rapid Construction	10%	15%	3 seconds
Tower with Rapid Construction	10%	4.5%	10 seconds
Lifestream/Worldbreaker/Comet-Catcher	10%	1.5%	30 seconds
All Other Buildings	10%	2.25%	20 seconds

Table 8: Building Construction

While still under construction, buildings will take 100% extra damage. If building when enemies are in the vicinity, be prepared to use crowd control to prevent the building from being destroyed as soon as it begins to construct. If an enemy appears as if he is going to place a building down near one of your points, make sure

you have units placed there to destroy it before it builds. Remember, a combination of burst damage and sustained damage is preferable, but always choose burst damage if you lack the power to get both.

Playing a spell is generally more complex than placing units or buildings. Playing a spell, unlike playing a unit or building, can activate a cooldown even if you have additional charges. Cards which do not have this cooldown will say “Immediately Reusable” in the spell effect; cards which do will say “Reusable in x seconds”. Pay close attention to your deck bar so you know when the cooldowns on spells will expire.

- Spells affect the match in different ways. Some spells (usually buffs, debuffs and damage over time spells) are played on a **single target** (although it may affect surrounding units.) To play this type, simply click the card and click the unit you want to cast it on.
- Other spells affect the units within an **area of effect** (usually direct damage spells, heals and crowd control). These spells are more difficult to wield than single-target spells, as there is much discrepancy in the way they affect units. I will outline the various types and suggest how best to maximise their usage.
 - **Damage spells** do damage proportional to the amount of viable targets inside the area. For this purpose, a target may be a single member of a squad unit. Consider the following example.

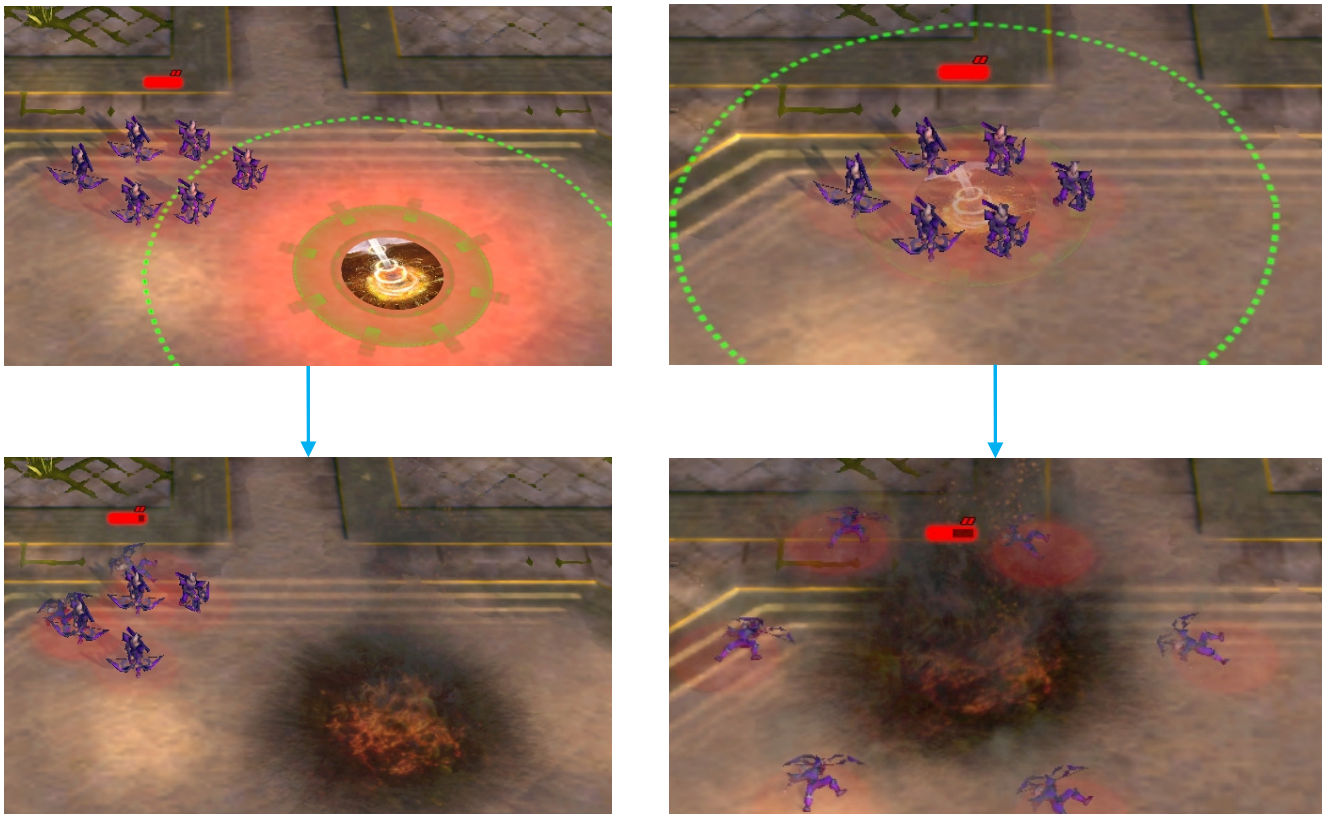


Figure 8: Eruption's effect on a squad unit

The left hand Eruption only has two members of the squad of 6 Dark Elves in its effective range, which means it only does 1/3 of the possible damage. The right hand Eruption affects the entire squad, and does much more damage.

Against single units, the spell will only work if you capture half or more of the creature's base circle (the ring around their feet) in the spell's area of effect.



Figure 9: Eruption's effect on singular units

- **Crowd Control spells**, unlike Damage spells, do not divide up their effect based on who is caught in the area, but affect all viable targets equally (up to whatever the set limit of the effect is.) However, they must affect at least half of the unit for the unit to be successfully crowd controlled. Consider the following example.



Figure 10: Oink!'s effect on squad units

In order to Oink! the entire unit, you have to ensure that at least three members of the squad are inside the area of effect. Any less, and they will not be effected at all.

For singular units, the same principle applies as with the damage spells.

- **Healing spells** affects squad based units different from damage and crowd control. Consider the following example.



Figure 11: Surge of Light's effect on squad units

So long as one member of the target squad is inside the area of effect, the entire squad will be healed.

For singular units, the same principle applies as with Damage and CC spells.

- A few spells affect the map **globally**, and so it matters little where you click when playing the card.
- **Hurricane**, **Ice Tornado** and **Wildfire** have a different targeting mechanism. To play these cards, you must click a start point first and then specify a direction.

Using an ability is similar to using a spell, and follow the same basic casting principles as in the spells above. To activate it, you must first click the ability that appears over the units head. Some will activate immediately, others require you to specify a location or a direction. If you have multiple identical units selected, you can order them to activate their abilities simultaneously by clicking the button that appears next to the units selected box, underneath the minimap (providing the ability does not have a power cost.)

4. Healing and Repair

To get the most out of your units and buildings, it is necessary to maximise their lifespan. You can make do using heal spells if you have them, but there are mechanics in game to allow slow healing of your units without the need for spells.

- To **heal a unit** that unit must get within about 10m of a friendly building. They will start gaining health at the following rate:

$$H/s = \frac{M}{50} + 10$$

Figure 12: Unit Health Equation #1

Where **H/s** is health gained per second and **M** is the maximum amount of health the unit has.

While this is useful, it's generally more practical to think about the percentage of health that a unit will gain every second. This is measured as follows:

$$\%M/s = 100 \left(\frac{M + 500}{50M} \right)$$

Figure 13: Unit Health Equation #2

Where **%M/s** is the percentage of the unit's maximum health that it gains every second, and **M** is the total amount of health the unit has. Consider the following table:

Unit Health	Health gained per second	% Maximum Health gained per second	Time Taken to Heal to Full
500	20	4%	25s
1000	30	3%	34s
1500	40	2.67%	38s
2000	50	2.5%	40s
3000	70	2.33%	43s
4000	90	2.25%	45s

Table 9: Comparison of Unit Health Gain

The higher the unit's maximum health, the longer it takes to heal. A unit with over 4000 maximum health takes almost twice as long to heal to maximum as a unit with 500 total health. Take this into consideration when using spell-heals which heal based on the units maximum health, such as Ray of Light which heals 3% every second. It will be quicker (and more efficient) to heal units at a friendly building if the unit has less than 1000 health, but is useful for quickly healing units with a lot of health.

Note that squad based units will heal slower if members of their unit are outside the effective heal range of the building. Make sure they get close to maximise their healing efficiency.

- To **repair a building** you must select the building and click the repair button above it. It will begin to repair so long as there are no enemies in the vicinity. Note that walls, as they do not count as ground units, must have another ground unit nearby to repair.

Upon clicking the repair button, power will slowly drain from your UP and add to the health of the building. Building repair is very similar to building construction; buildings with rapid construction will repair faster.

Building	% of maximum health gained per second	Time to repair to full
Shrine/Barrier with Rapid Construction	11.11%	9 seconds
Tower with Rapid Construction	3.33%	30 seconds
Walls	2.5%	40 seconds
Monument	1.11%	90 seconds
Lifestream/Worldbreaker/Comet-Catcher	1.11%	90 seconds
All Other Buildings	1.67%	60 seconds

Table 10: Building Repair

The power cost of repairing a building is negligible. It costs around 1 power a second, but as 100% of this is transferred into VP (see Table 7), it will be quickly refunded back into your UP.

Power Wells have a very different repair mechanic, similar to the way they are constructed. Upon selecting the repair button, a power well will repair to maximum health instantaneously so long as (a) you have enough power and (b) there are no enemies nearby. The cost of repairing a well is high. The maximum cost (ie, the cost of repairing a well that has taken 1999 damage) is 150 power. Repairing a well at half health will cost 75 power.

Due to this high cost, some advocate abandoning a power well if it has less than 666 health left, as this will mean it costs 100 power or more; for that amount, you may as well just build another power well (so the argument goes.) However, it is important to remember that losing the power well will be 100 power permanently lost from your system, whereas the entire repair cost will be refunded to your VP. It is, I believe, far more advantageous to pay slightly more and keep the power well, as that power will quickly refund back into your system (a transfer of 100 power to your VP will increase your VPI by 2, remember.)

8

HMMM... THEY SEEM TO BE WINNING. JENKINS, PRESS THE IWIN BUTTON

(Basic strategies)

In this section I will outline a few of the strategies which have been and are being used by Battleforge players. These won't be specific strategies which outline an exact build order and so on, but rather general thoughts about strategies and how to counter them, and suggestions about which units to use to play the strategy well. For more specific information on strategies visit the forums or download replays from <http://www.bfcards.info/search.php?i=demolist>, but avoid copying what everyone else is doing. It might be an easy way to win, but it won't make you a good player.

1. Rushing

Rushing is a fairly basic RTS strategy. The aim is to overwhelm your opponent with sheer brute force. The spawn mechanic in Battleforge makes rushing a mixed bag. While you can consistently plonk down units in your opponent's base, they will be weaker than anything your opponent can spawn. The key to rushing is an advantage in numbers; if you can maintain double the damage output of the defender, then his units starting at full health will count for naught. This is difficult since your summoned units only start with 50% damage, but not impossible if you use counters well. You need to have units for countering anything your opponent might play as a defence, otherwise you won't come close to matching his damage.

Rushing works best when your opponent has spent power on something which does not immediately benefit him, such as a power well or a support building. This affords you an advantage in offensive forces. Rushing an opponent who has similar power to you is difficult to pull off at the best of times.

The two best colours for rushing in t1 are fire and shadow, for several reasons. Both have powerful t1 units with high damage. Fire has some units designed specifically to aid rushing, such as multiple swift units, the Wrecker unit with his no-SS field, and the only t1 siege unit, the Sunderer. Shadow possesses cheap units, which makes it easy to maintain a numbers advantage over your opponent, and a nice mix of units for countering various defensive units your opponent might spawn. Make sure you have units with lots of charges, as rushing can go on for a long time.

You can rush in other tiers, but it becomes more difficult as your opponent will have a wider array of counters. Again, it is best to rush when your opponent has bound power to something which lacks attack capabilities.

Countering rushing relies on you being able to predict what your opponent is going to do. Against fire and shadow, always be wary of a potential rush. Do not build a power well before your opponent does, otherwise you will be inviting a rush. You have to ensure that every counter you play is efficient. If playing against Shadow, try to avoid fighting his units when they activate their abilities, as this makes them far stronger.

Concentrate on taking down units with SS. If the map is fairly large, such as on Haladur and Uro, one tactic could be to hurry to tier 2 and beat your opponent with better monsters (works especially well if it affords your mass damage units like Shadow Phoenix, Lava Field and Parasite.)

2. Harassment

Harassment is extremely useful in Battleforge, due to the nature of the power system. It is very rarely a win strategy in and of itself (though you can turn harassment into a win strategy if your opponent plays exceptionally poorly.) Harassment has two major aims; to get your opponent to spend more power than you countering the units doing the harassing, and to misdirect him so that he believes your focus is on one point when it is actually on another.

A successful harassment requires units which are fairly sturdy and preferably swift (though on small maps this is not a necessity.) Their power cost is only important insofar as you should ensure the opponent will have to spend more power than you to counter them. You are *expecting* the units to die, upon which their power cost will refund to VP and you can continue harassing or switch to a strategy which is more likely to result in victory, with your newfound power advantage over your opponent.

Misdirection is a powerful element of harassment, and is a good way to counter enemies who are spread out across the map. Attack one point, and do all you can to make it seem like this is the point you want to take. He will be forced to put down defenders. Then, as soon as your opponent has spent more on defence than you have on your offense, launch another attack on a different point; it can be either one you actually want to take (if your power advantage is sufficiently large) or another feint. His forces will be in the wrong place, and you will be able to do more damage than before (and his defences will be weaker). Repeat until your advantage is sufficiently large.

All colours have units capable of harassment, but colours with good swift units make the best harassers. Among the best units for harassment are Nightcrawlers, Scythe Fiends, Lyrish Knights and Burrowers.

Countering harassment requires you have to have a good knowledge of efficient counters. You need to be able to defend a point with the same or less power than the attacker. Should you end up with lots of units (and thus a lot of BP) at one point, and your opponent begins to attack another far away, consider killing your units to gain the VP and defending at the other point. Only do this if, again, you are convinced you can defend efficiently. Alternatively, if the units are swift or if there is an enemy point nearby, begin harassing one of his and defend your point as best you can.

One of the easiest ways to counter harassment is, if you have walls foundations in between the point and the harassing unit, place them down. This is often enough to dissuade the unit from harassment, but some players will attack the wall or go round. If this happens, and if the wall is sufficiently close to the point, use archery units on the walls to provide an effective and sturdy defence. Don't try this against Burrowers, as their acid spit will damage the wall and render it un-climbable for a period. However, a cheap wall is an effective way to tempt the Burrower-player into spending a lot of power (60) on the ability, thus giving you more power to work with.

3. One Unit Wonders

A one unit wonder is a unit which can wreak total havoc, forcing the enemy to spend obscene amounts of power to defend against it (with no insurance he will win), or else destroying an enemies base. One Unit

Wonders, therefore, need to have some way of surviving for a long time. Heals are a necessity, and buffs are preferred. There are no real One Unit Wonders at t1 (with the possible exception of a Sunderer), but there are plenty at t2 and t3. A One Unit Wonder should be cheap enough to rush out as soon as you hit the necessary tier.

Flying units make good One Unit Wonders as they can easily avoid a bad situation by flying over an inaccessible area, and they are immune to being rooted. They also tend to have quite powerful attacks (Skyfire Drake, Swamp Drake), but lower health. Thus heals and/or buffs are necessary to ensure their protection. Ground units can be good One Unit Wonders too, so long as they have abilities which lengthen their lifespan. Mountaineers, with their shield, for example, make a good (but expensive) One Unit Wonder, albeit one which requires a lot of micromanage to be used well. Ashbones are a fantastic t3 One Unit Wonder as the combination of Siege with Lifestealing means they can survive for a long time without needing heals so long as there are enemy buildings nearby.

Countering One Unit Wonders ranges in difficulty, depending on the unit in question and the colours you are playing. Crowd Control is easily the best way to deal with One Unit Wonders, as it hampers their damage output, negates their buffs, and prevents their escape. Nature/Frost players have it fairly easy. Flying units are slightly more difficult to counter due to lack of susceptibility to Rooting, but sufficient ranged damage is enough to get the job done, or else make them flee.

If you lack CC, countering OUWs will be a challenge. Your best bet is to maximise your damage output to force the player into spending lots of power on heals or buffs (which tend to be fairly expensive.) Use counters against the units size (they are generally large, so try to have one or two L-counters in your deck). If all else fails, launch an attack on your opponent's base. OUWs tend to be great for offence but mediocre for defence, and launching an attack may force the player to use his OUW for defence. Push him outside of his comfort zone.

Don't be afraid to spend slightly more power countering a One Unit Wonder than the player who cast it. Often players put so much stock in these units that successfully countering them will reward you in a massive morale victory. Pressing your advantage after killing a OUW, attacking one of his orbs and forcing him to defend is a great way to counter this strategy, and will often result in victory.

4. Infiltration

Infiltration is an act of deception. There are no stealth units in Battleforge, but that doesn't mean you can't sneak an attack on your opponent. Head into his base with a fairly weak creature, and your opponent may think you are going for a harassment strategy. Then suddenly you spawn several powerful units with your reserved power and begin attacking his point. This is a great tactic to use after several harassments, as your opponent will probably assume you have no intention of taking this point, just like you had no intention of taking the others. Infiltration also works after your opponent has spent a lot of power somewhere else on the map, which will ensure a successful offence.

Rapid construction buildings are a great tool to use for infiltration, as they provide a pseudo-point from which to launch your attacks. Fire has the advantage of using buildings like Rallying Banner to spawn units without SS, and Frost has some of the best cards for infiltration due to the combination of Ice Barrier and Home Soil with Lyrish Knights, which gives your offensive forces a damage buff for a cheap cost. Most of the units listed above as good for harassment are also great for infiltration.

You can also use buildings in infiltration. Two of the best to use are Termite Mound and Cannon Tower which can do a lot of damage and both are quite sturdy.

Countering infiltration is very similar to countering rushing. Don't spend any power except on defending the point as soon as you are sure of his play; building a power well at the wrong moment will be extremely costly. Unlike harassment, if you are sure your opponent is attempting to take this point, don't be afraid to spend more power than he on defence, as there is a good chance that the defensive units you place now will stand you in good stead for his next attack (unless he relocates, so be ready.)

Against an opponent who is using buildings as part of his infiltration strategy, you have to be ready to destroy them before they build. Built offensive structures in your base are extremely difficult to kill. Use the period of extra damage to your advantage. Assuming the structure has a 20 second build time (as most do), you should use a unit which has an Attack Value of at least half the amount of the structure's maximum health (as this is the amount of damage the unit can do in about 17 seconds, and so with the 100% damage bonus against a constructing building, it should be enough to destroy it.) A built structure in your base is not necessarily an issue unless your opponent has a Frost orb, in which case he can likely keep the building up indefinitely. Your best bet at this point is to relocate, or launch an attack on your opponent.

5. Wall Offence

Wall offense is, depending on the map, a micro-strategy for taking a point or an easy way to win. The idea is to use the defensive bonus offered by walls to attack your opponent's point safely with numerous archers, and keep him locked in to prevent him from relocating. This works especially well on Lajesh, due to the close proximity of the bases and numerous walls, but is also useful on maps like Uro where two of the points have wall foundations nearby.

Countering wall offense is as easy as practicing it, which is why it is generally inadvisable to rely on this strategy to win. Simply placing a unit down will prevent your opponent from being able to build a wall there, and building the wall will mean he is unable to use this strategy unless he destroys the wall (which is no mean feat).

6. Map Domination

Map domination is a long term strategy for winning matches of Battleforge. The aim is to take as many points as possible, so your opponent is more and more restricted in terms of choice. This will give you both a power and a manoeuvrability advantage. Extremely successful map dominations can even prevent your opponent from reaching higher tiers, thereby allowing you to wipe him out with t3 (or even t4!) units, while he is stuck in t2.

These advantages are concomitant with certain disadvantages. This is an extremely power-hungry strategy as you are constantly binding power to points, with little left for offence or defence. You can reduce this power cost by building towers or other structures at points instead of power wells or monuments. While this does give you a cheap defence and locks the point down for you, it also means units summoned at that point will have SS.

Maps like Haladur are fantastic for map domination due to a lack of walls and the lack of routes to reach certain points. In order to get to t3 on Haladur you have to enter the central area by one of four passes. Holding those four passes will give you free reign of the central area and lots of power wells/monuments to

pick from. Swift units are a must for successful map domination, and having strong towers will be very advantageous, though not necessary.

Maps which have a lot of walls can also be useful for map domination, as instead of binding power to a point you block your enemy off from a point by building a wall instead. You will of course have to run a unit over there to build at the point, but it's a quick way to reduce your enemy's movement capabilities.

To counter map domination, you are best off using a strategy like harassment which forces your opponent to spend power on defence, thereby limiting his ability to spread his power. Assuming he has spent more power on other points, you should have an advantage. Ensure that you are never locked off from reaching t3, and if you are, do all you can to break through his defensive perimeter (again using harassment). Alternatively, counter it by using the same strategy. If you can keep up with the amount of points he is taking or better it, then the strategy will not privilege him over you. Only attempt this if you are skilled at map domination, as it is a difficult strategy to use correctly to its high power cost.

7. Turtling

Like in other strategy games, turtling consists of building up at a select few points and refusing to attack offensively until your advantage is clear. On the whole, turtling is not recommended in Battleforge, simply due to the lack of fog of war. Your opponent will know as soon as you begin to turtle, as you will no longer be claiming points and will be doing seemingly very little with your power. Such an obvious strategy is easy to counter, but there are ways to ensure an effective turtle-strategy.

Turtling works best on maps which have a point with lots of power wells (like Yrmia, Simai and Elyon.) Walls also make it easier to turtle, although they may be an unnecessary power cost.

In Battleforge, you need to be able to counter attacks extremely efficiently in order to make turtling effective. If you can't, your opponent will have both a map and a power advantage. One strategy is to take two points which have monument-foundations, building a well at one and a monument at the other. Then defend the points as efficiently you as you can, and build your t3 monument at the point with the well as soon as you have the power. You will then be able to dominate your opponent before he can reach t3.

The misnamed Harvester Rush is actually a turtling strategy, as it involves playing defensively until the Shadow player has 300 power (which is no small amount). The player can use things like Resource Boosters to boost his power income to this end.

At first glance, the best way to counter turtling is seemingly with map domination, as your opponent has essentially forfeited the majority of the map. However, the power you spend on map domination will be power than the turtler uses to get to his desired goal. Instead, you should be using strategies which force him to spend power. A One Unit Wonder, for example, makes a great answer to an obvious turtler as the amount of power he will have to spend to counter the unit will prevent him from reaching his goal anytime soon. Once he has spent power, you can then press your map advantage and take more points.

9

I BEAT THIS GUY AT BATTLEFORGE AND ALL I GOT WAS THIS STUPID ELO

(PvP Rewards)

1. ELO and Rank

There are plenty of rewards for playing ranked Battleforge PvP. The most coveted one is **ELO** as this defines your PvP rank. Note that ELO score currently only applies to 1v1 PvP; 2v2 PvP may have a separate ladder in the future. See below for the PvP ranks and the ELO needed to attain them.

Rank	Title	ELO required
0	Victim	0
1	Soldier	1
2	Fighter	10000
3	Savage	20000
4	Warrior	40000
5	Aggressor	60000
6	Knight	67000
7	Crusader	72000
8	Myrmidon	76000
9	Veteran	80000
10	Champion	84000
11	Avenger	87000
12	Devastator	90000
13	Slayer	93000
14	Destroyer	96000
15	Reaper	100000
16	Fiend	104000
17	Archfiend	108000
18	Fury	112000
19	Bane	116000
20	Annihilator	120000
21	Battlemaster	124000
22	Grandmaster	127000
23	Ruler	130000
24	Supreme	133000
25	Legend	135000

Table 11: PvP Ranks

The ELO system works as follows. If you win a match, you gain ELO. If you lose, you lose ELO. If your ELO was equal you would gain or lose 500 ELO. If your ELO was higher than your opponents, you would gain less than 500 ELO for a win, and lose more than 500 for a loss. The reverse is true if your ELO is lower than that of your opponents (a win results in more than 500 ELO gained, a loss results in less than 500 ELO lost.) The amount above or below 500 depends on your difference; winning a match against a very low player may afford you only 200 ELO, but winning a match against someone a rank or two higher may win you 600 or more. (Note that for the first few ranks, you can't lose ELO, only win it.)

Attaining a high ELO and rank isn't just a measure of how good you are, it ensures that your voice is respected in the Battleforge community.

2. Tokens and Gold

Playing Battleforge PvP will also net you tokens and gold. You will always receive at least one Battle Token and some gold whether you win or lose. Winning will net you more, as will a higher score at the end. Winning will also afford you one Victory Token.

Playing both 1v1 and 2v2 matches will give you tokens and gold, and so playing 2v2 is a good way to earn these without risking your 1v1 ELO score.

Tokens and gold are used for card upgrades.

3. Collection or Tome?

There are two sorts of PvP in Battleforge; Collection and Tome. As stated in Section 4, Collection decks are those which allow you to use any card which is not part of a Tome, and Tome decks are limited to the cards received in 6 boosters packs (plus an extra 8). Collection is the standard PvP mode as you have free choice over the cards you use, so long as you own them. Tome PvP is for those players who want to challenge their own deck-building skills. You have to make do with a limited number of cards (although you guaranteed no duplicates). Be aware that many players buy lots of Tomes in order to get particular cards, which somewhat defeats the point of Tome PvP, but your card choice is usually varied enough to allow a multiplicity of viable decks.

The rewards received for Tome PvP matches are greater than in Collection matches. There is another type of token (the Honour tokens) which have yet to be fully implemented in Battleforge. These can only be earned by playing Tome matches.

4. Upgrade System

Upgrading cards is a crucial in getting the most out of your cards in Battleforge PvP. Some cards only become truly viable once they have been upgraded. There are two ways to receive upgrades, one via PvP and the other via PvE.

- The **PvP upgrade method** is based on cumulative rewards from playing PvP. To purchase upgrades you must first access the Upgrade Interface by right clicking on the card you want to upgrade and selecting Upgrade, and then clicking the Claim Upgrades tab at the top of the window. It looks like this:



Figure 14: Claim Upgrades Window

At the bottom of the window you will see how many Honour, Victory and Battle tokens you currently have. Underneath every upgrade it will list the cost in tokens and the required PvP rank. If you have sufficient tokens and the correct rank, you can claim the upgrade by clicking the radial button in the relevant upgrade and then the "Claim" button.

- The **PvE upgrade method** is similar to that of the drop method in most MMORPGs, like World of Warcraft. Completing a PvE scenario successfully will reward players with upgrades to their cards, which will be handed out depending on the loot method enabled. For a list of which upgrades are rewarded for which scenario, please visit <http://bfcards.info/search.php?i=loot>.

Note that upon receiving these upgrades, whether via PvE rewards or PvE claiming, their statistics will not be automatically amend. These upgrades merely give you the power to perform the upgrade.

To perform it, right click on the card you want to upgrade and select Upgrade. You will see a screen similar to this:



Figure 15: Upgrade Interface

The Basic Card is the card without any upgrades. If you have available upgrades, they will appear in the top row. Click the radial button and you will see an Upgrade Cost at the bottom right. This is the cost in gold that you must pay to upgrade the card. Upgrade cost is dependent on rarity and the level of the upgrade.

	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Ultra Rare
Level I	50	150	400	800
Level II	250	500	1000	2000

Table 12: Upgrade Cost

The Preview area shows you what the card will look like once upgraded. Click Combine to pay the cost and upgrade the card. If you have duplicates of the card, you can also apply a Charge Upgrade to an upgraded card, which increases the number of times you can play the card without cooldown. Charge Upgrades are free.

Upgraded cards will have a "I" or "II" next to their name, depending on which upgrade has been applied. Stars will appear next to abilities that have been upgraded. Promo cards have a large star next to their name, which denotes that they are fully upgraded.

10

WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE, A GODAMN DICTIONARY?

(Glossary of Terms)

In this section I'll just list a few of the key terms used in Battleforge and this guide. Some entries will be followed by page references; go to that page to find out more.

Ability– **Units** and **buildings** may have abilities which give them extra powers. They come in four flavours, Passive, Auto-Cast, Activated and Toggled. **pg. 7, 28-29**

Additional Power (AP) – **Power** gained by means other than **wells** or **void power**. **pg. 15**

Aerial (Flying) – A type of **unit** which flies. **pg. 20**

Attack Type – The type of damage that unit does, in terms of **melee/ranged/special** and the effective unit size. **pg. 6**

Base – Your initial starting **structures**. **pg. 23**

Bound Power (BP) – The aggregate of the **power costs** of all your **units** and buildings current in play. **pg. 15**

Building (Structure) – 1. A **card** type. 2. The manifestations of played building cards on a map, along with **power wells** and **monuments**. **pg. 8-9, 25**

Card – The **units**, **buildings** and **spells** which you can play.

Charges - The amount of times a card can be played without cooldown. **pg. 6**

Class – The role that unit/building/spell plays. **pg. 7, 9**

Colour (Element) – The basic factions of Battleforge. Every **card** is a part of one. **Orbs** are devoted to one colour. **pg. 11**

Counter – 1. A card which is played as an answer to an opponent's unit. 2. An attempt to defeat an opponent's strategy. **pg. 19-22**

Crowd Control (CC) – A **spell** or **ability** which limits the movement and/or attack capability of an enemy **unit**.

Deck – A selection of 20 (maximum) cards, which you play Battleforge matches with.

ELO – A score used to determine **rank**. Gained by playing ranked 1v1 PvP. **pg. 36**

Foundations – The predefined places on a map which allow you to place **monuments**, **wells** and **walls**. **pg. 23**

Gatherable Power (GP) – The total amount of **power** left in your **wells**. **pg. 14**

Gatherable Power Income (GPI) – The rate at which **power transfers** from your **GP** to your **UP**, in power per 2 seconds. **pg. 14**

Ground – A type of **unit** which traverses the ground. Note that some units appear to float, but count as ground units as they cannot bypass **terrain** obstacles.

Lost Power (LP) – **Power** that is lost from your **system**. **pg. 15**

Melee – 1. A kind of **attack type**. 2. Units which must be contact with enemy units in order to attack them. **pg. 7**

Micromanagement – Directly controlling a unit / some units, usually with the aim of maximising their efficiency.

Minimap – The map at the top right of the screen which allows you to move around quickly.

Monument – A structure which allows you to house an **Orb**.

Orb – Orbs unlock **cards** in your **deck**, and define your current **tier**.

Overpowered (OP) – **Cards** or strategies which are considered to be much more powerful than other cards/strategies which are of a similar **tier/cost**. Also known as imbalanced or “imba”.

Point – A place on the map which has one or several **monuments/power wells** in close proximity to one another. **pg. 23-24**.

Power – The resource which you need to play **cards**, build and **repair buildings** etc. **pg. 14-18**

Power Advantage – Having a weightier, more fluid power system than your opponent. **pg. 18**

Power Cost – The amount of power needed to undertake a particular action, such as playing a card, repairing a building.

Power Cycle – The cycle of power between **UP**, **VP** and **BP**. **pg. 16**

Power Income – Your AP + GPI + VPI. **pg. 16, 18**

Power State – The current status of a certain amount of power in your **power system**. **pg. 14-16**

Power System – The mechanics of your power, wherein it moves from state to state. **pg. 16**

Power Transfer – Whenever **power** moves from one **power state** to another. **pg. 16**

Power Well – The **structures** which gain you **power** via a **transfer** of **GP** to **UP**.

Purity – The mixing (or lack of mixing) of your deck's colours. **pg. 12**

Ranged – 1. A kind of **attack type**. 2. Units which are able to attack their enemies from afar. **pg. 7**

Rank – A level which determines the people you are likely to play ranked 1v1 matches against. **pg. 36**

Siege – 1. An **ability** which increases a unit's damage to buildings. 2. A **unit** which possesses the siege ability. **pg. 20**

Size – The size category of a unit; either S, M, L or XL. **pg. 8, 19**

Special – A kind of **attack type**. **pg. 7**

Spell – A **card** type. **pg. 9-10, 25-28**

Squad – A type of **unit** which has several members. All small units come in squads, as do several medium units.

Summoning Sickness (SS, Dazed) – Placing down a unit away from a power well or monument will result in that unit starting at half health, dealing only 50% damage with activated abilities unusable. **pg. 25**

Tier (Era) – 1. The number of orbs you currently have. 2. The number of orbs required to play a card. Often shortened to t1, t2, etc. **pg. 6, 12**

Terrain – The features of a map. **pg. 23**

Unit – 1. A **card** type. 2. The manifestations of played unit cards on a map. **pg. 6-8, 25**

Upgrade – A way of increasing the statistics of a **card**. **pg. 37-39**

Usable Power (UP) – The amount of **power** that is current available for you to use. **pg. 14**

Void Power (VP) – Power that is gained from dead **units**, destroyed **buildings**, cast **spells**, etc. **pg. 14**

Void Power Income (VPI) – The rate at which you gain **UP**, taken from your **VP**. Measured in power per 2 seconds. **pg. 14**

Walls – Structures which block enemy movement and can allow small **ranged units** to climb them and fire. **pg. 23**

II

SCREW ALL Y'ALL, I DID THIS ON MY OWN

(Acknowledgements)

Firstly, I would like to thank Kaldra for his PvP guide, which helped me when I was just starting out in the big wide world (of Battleforge). Thanks for that.

Elendil's PvP guide also provided the impetus for my writing this. My diagram of the power system is a reworking of the diagram that appears in Elendil's guide, and it was useful for me to compare my own notes against his. Thanks man, nice work on your guide.

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Lastly, but definitely not leastly, I would like to thank my girlfriend Argentum for making the cover for this guide, and being an invaluable font of typographic wisdom (see what I did there?)

If you would like to contact me about anything in this guide, whether it is an error that needs to be corrected or something you don't quite understand, please send me a PM on the Battleforge forums or get in touch with me in game (my name on both is Circadia).