

# 540K



BY FRITZ



Do I still feel bad after all these years...

I first met my good bud Jawaballs back when we were playing D&D together- at the time we all had miniatures to represent our characters and I noticed that JB's figure was exquisitely painted, and I quickly found out that he enjoyed collecting and painting them.

"Dude, you need to get into this game called 40K..."

"You build and paint your own army, and then fight it out on the table..."

After showing JB some of my Eldar he was sold right there. Fun fact for those of you who know the man and his contributions to Blood Angles, contrary to internet lore his first army was Black Templars.


Those first months of playing I showed Jawa no mercy on the table, gunning down Space Marines out in the open with my star cannons, cutting down initiates with my howling banshees, I must have wiped out more than half the chapter.

Jawa paid a steep price for his baptism into 40K, and eventually he figured it out along the way, and our games got closer and closer till my Eldar suffered their first defeat and the tipping point was reached. JB went from n00b to vet status.

I mention this because if you are new to 40K there is a learning curve to the game, as there is with any game, but in many ways 40K is a bit harder on gamer morale- you spend so much time building and painting a fantastic army on the table, and losing takes the enthusiasm out of the game. Especially if it is a crushing defeat.

Sure the game should not be about winning or losing, but rather a thematic story, but let's be honest, winning is important for keeping you going in the hobby.

So recently Jawa and I were laughing about those early days of one sided fun, when he joked I had to pay some penance to the Emperor for all the marines I killed and that in a way got me thinking.



Let me write something up quick and to the point to help jump start a new 40K gamer into the hobby. Sure I talk about tactics and army build on my blog and podcasts, and I offer perspectives focused on certain armies with my guides, but what about the mental framework of the new gamer- something to show them what to look out for and hopefully cut down that learning curve a bit...

### **1: Find Yourself A Mentor**

The first place to start is to find yourself a mentor in 40K- allow your ego to become an apprentice of sorts, which is especially powerful with gaming clubs, the internet, and YouTube. Find a player that is winning games, knows the game, and has a good command of tactics, and watch and learn what they do.

Sound easy?


Is it?

We often let our gaming emotions cloud our viewpoint, injecting our own wants or way of doing things into the situation rather than allowing us to step back and observe. We want to win games so fast and badly that we focus on it so much in the beginning of our 40K career.

Keep in mind that your first dozen or so games in 40K don't count as "real" games/losses. You are learning the game, culture, rules, and army that you are playing.

Being new to the game, it is often intimidating to play certain players- I remember guys at the club who scared me with how good they were at the game, and how could I possibly win against them- which I never did in the early days.

Simply put, in the club or hobby store environment you play find the hardest most bad ass player in your group and make it your mission to play games against them.



Watch what they do and how they smack you around on the table, but more importantly talk to them after the game, asking what you could have done better or differently.

The very players you want to run away from or never face are EXACTLY the players you want to take a beating from.

Expanding this out a bit, do the same with the blogs and YouTube, especially battle reports that feature the army you play- watch, study, and learn, and while it may seem like you are not making progress, you are heading towards that tipping point where you begin winning more games than you lose.

## **2: Start Small**

When you first start out in 40K your passion for the hobby is all consuming...

You want that huge fully painted army NOW, and that in itself can be a very daunting task to collect, build, and paint in itself- and well tackle that another time.

That said, think of this- if you suddenly had a 2K point army fully painted and ready to go, would you have any idea what to do with it? Playing with a huge army all at once is harder than you think- more rules to remember, more units to keep track of, etc.

Start small and learn small.

We all know Space Marines right? So let's use them as an example. Build an army of your HQ choice, two or three troop choices, and another unit that catches your fancy- maybe a flyer or terminators, and start playing games with this smaller army.

This has a number of advantages in that even if you have all the plastic to build that 2K army, you can focus on building and painting a few units so you are not overwhelmed followed by slowly working on building and painting your other units.

A smaller army will also make the game more manageable for you on all levels- rules, tactics, and game strategy. With less on the table you can more

(less = more) focus on learning how each unit works and interacts with the other units on the table- both yours and your opponent leading to a quicker grasp of the game and tactics.

Take it a step further and play some doubles games and you will be able to participate in bigger battles and learn from the other three players on the table...

### **3: Lose With Honor**

At some point in the game you know it is over- you have taken losses that you can't come back from, and winning the mission is now impossible. Hopefully this happens at the end of the game where there is a chance to win, but often games can be very one sided- there have been times where at the end of the third turn or so I know I'm done.

What to do?

Quit the game, and give your opponent the win?

**NEVER!**

First off this is being a bad gamer- when you set up your models with your opponent you agreed socially to a game and having fun. Play it out to the end with a smile and let your opponent have their fun blasting your models off the table, soon enough there will be time for revenge...

When a game is truly lost, and you don't have to worry about trying to win, then SO many opportunities open up if you allow them.

Start by picking a unit that is still alive on the table, and work on causing the most damage to your opponent with that unit. Say I have a group of howling banshees on the table sitting in a parked wave serpent that was waiting till the end of the game to remove scoring units off objectives...

...well now the game is lost so let's send them out now, and really try to push the tactics and see how much I can kill with them, keeping them alive.

Are there other things I can practice and learn on the gaming table?

Do I have enough anti-flyer in my army?

I think so, but let's spend a few turns just shooting at my opponent's flyers on the table and see what happens...

Is there anything else I can game out?

Maybe find out how tough my terminators are?

Look at what you have left on the table and look to use each unit by itself to learn about the unit and what it can do in a real live game.

#### **4: Army Build + 1**

As you get better at 40K, you are going to start becoming locked into habits- both good and bad as you take strategies from other players and copy them. Copying is good, but eventually you want to take it a step further and assimilate them so they become your own- tactics that are adjusted for your play style and what you like on the table.

Find that starting point, learn it, and then break it to make it your own.

Always continue to look at and examine your codex and all the units and wargear in it- are there any units that you have overlooked of not taken because the "internet" says they are not good?

Are there any tactical advantages or jumping off points that you missed because you were not at a point in your gaming maturity to see them.

As soon as you think you have mastered something in the game, go back and look at it with a new perspective to make sure you have really mastered it and not overlooked any tactical options that you can use in the future...

## 5: What If?

The last piece of advice I'd like to leave you with to atone for the sins I've committed against the Emperor is to always be asking yourself "what if".

On an average gaming night at the club, after I've finished up, I always like to take a walk around the gaming hall before I start socializing with the guys.

I want to see the other games being played and the other armies on the table so I can ask myself-

What do those armies take at 2K points?

Who is winning and why?

What units do they have that I don't and why?

How would my army beat that army on the table if we faced each other in a battle?

How could I make that army better?

Visually SEEING another army on the table, and asking these honest questions to yourself will help bridge your book tactics to the table, which is the final tipping point in getting you to win more games then you lose...

Fritz