

WARHAMMER
SCENARIO
COMPETITION 2006

THE OLDE BALL
GAME

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THE OLDE BALL GAME

Introduction

I first came across Snotball when reading the first edition of ‘A complete guide to Middenheim – City of the White Wolf’ in November 1990. And now, exactly 16 years later, I have an opportunity to set an adventure based on this madcap Middenheim pastime! This scenario is suitable for 4 to 6 characters.

Synopsis (for the Gamemaster ONLY!!!)

The adventure can take place in Middenheim, before the events that occur in the Storm of Chaos story arc. Or it can take place in Altdorf after the Storm of Chaos. The adventure prepared here sets events in Middenheim, just before the Storm of Chaos.

The annual Snotball Cup Finals will begin in 24 hours and the whole city is abuzz with excitement. The 2 finalists are The Blue Warthogs – a local team with a powerful patron, Baron Juergan Podolski, who wishes nothing more than to add more glory to his name, as well as bragging rights among the nobility. The opposing team are The Black Crows – a team sponsored by Charles Nickerby, an up and coming merchant from Bretonnia who is trying to up his social status and political standing in within Middenheim.

The adventurers are approached by a Trapper – Fredrich Borowitz, who happens to know one of the PCs. The organisers of the game have a problem. For some mysterious reason, every last one of their Snotlings have died. Fredrich now has the urgent task of ‘acquiring’ at least 5 Snotlings for the game.

If enough of the adventurers have horses then Fredrich will also ride a horse. If the characters have insufficient horses then Fredrich will drive a cart or wagon and the characters can hop on while the rest who have horses can ride. They should set off almost immediately, such is the urgency of the matter, and may make only one or two purchases before setting off.

Unbeknown to them, someone has sent a mercenary party after them, to either stop them from succeeding, or rob them of the Snotlings and claiming the 150GCs for themselves. This ‘someone’ is Hugo Grandoil, the nephew of Charles Nickerby, who is working secretly with Baron Juergan Podolski to embarrass his uncle. Hugo is doing this because he wants to return to Bretonnia, and he feels that embarrassing his uncle here would hasten the process. Needless to say, Baron Juergan wishes nothing more than to see Charles Nickerby fall flat on his face and lose his standing amongst the nobility and business elite of Middenheim. Hugo was the one who poisoned that original batch of Snotlings and then found out about Charles’ attempt to get some more. Hugo then approached Baron Juergan, and the Baron happily provided the gold needed to hire a group of mercenaries.

The mercenaries will attempt to follow the adventurers as best as possible and relieve them of the Snotlings after the adventurers have done all the hard work. If the adventurers realise they are being followed and manage to shake off their pursuers, the mercenaries will simply lie in ambush as the adventurers return.

Part 1: The Black Hammers Inn

The Black Hammers Inn is owned by a group of retired mercenaries who now reside in the city. They were well known for using black warhammers as their weapon of choice. Most of them are now middle aged businessmen and this inn is just one of their investments. The inn now serves as a gathering for mercenaries and adventurers who are seeking employment or excitement. Everyone constantly scan the west wall, which now serves as a board for posters, adverts and offers of employment.

Offers of employment have been slow, as trading has slowed down between Middenheim and other cities (due to the brewing troubles in The Storm of Chaos). ANY type of employment is now eagerly awaited as money is running low. As the PCs are discussing what to do for money, in walks Fredrich, a friend of one of the PCs. He scans the room (PCs can make a perception test to see if they spot him). Anyway he eventually spots them and hurries over. He drags a chair and immediately sits down without invitation.

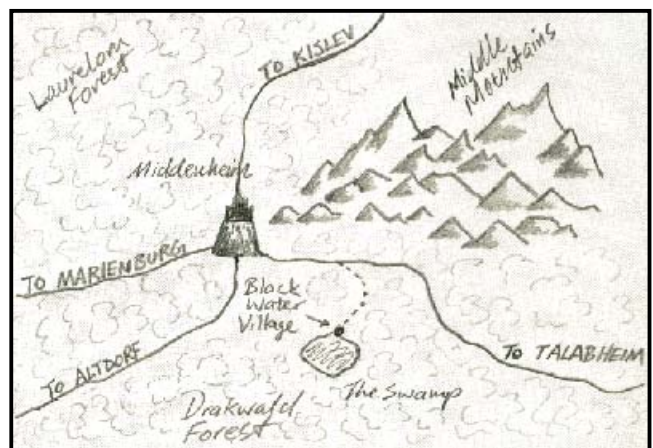
“Gents!” he says in a hush tone, “Yer in luck! I gotta job fer you gents, and the purse is a hundred Gs! So we all gets a even split yea? Yer know the Snotball cup fer tomorrow? Well as you knows I works for the man who’s a puttin the game together and he needs some of them Snotlings fer the game, urgent, and he’s givin me a 100 crowns ta get em!” (He actually got 150GCs)

Possible questions for Fredrich

1. What happened to the original Snotlings?
“Well umm they sort of died all together, no one knows why! And its no my place ta ask!”
2. Who is the person organising the games?
“Ahh, dat would be Master Charles Nickerby, recently arrived from Bretonnia, he put up the most money this year to sponsor the cup!”
3. How long do we have for this job?
“The games tarts at the 3rd hour after noon, so we have ta get the Snotlings to da binders at least 2 hours before it starts. Seeing how its an hour before lunch right now, dat gives us exactly 26 hours!”
4. When do we get paid?
“After we delivers the goods!”
5. Where do we find the Snotlings?
“Errmm, well we have to go out of the city, ride about half a day, get through a smaaalll swamp about half a day and then back again, all in all about 24 hours! No sweat!”

Part 2: Setting Off!

The party sets off through the Eastern gates of the city and down the winding pass. If they are not wearing the livery or display the symbols of the city, they are to pay 2 pennies for each leg! Since it is about noon, there are very few comings and goings, so getting through the gate and down the path is a smooth affair and they reach the main road less than half and hour later. Here they can begin to move faster along the road, with Fredrich leading the way. Fifteen minutes later the mercenaries exit the gates too and follow the heroes. Since there is only one road, the mercenaries have no problems following the heroes.



Part 3: The Swamp Folk

2 hours into their journey and the heroes are riding at a moderate pace when they pass a bend in the road. They immediately notice that there is a commotion up ahead about 150 feet away (about 50m). A bunch of humanoid figures are harassing one or more people.

The humanoid figures are actually human mutants lead by a Chaos Beastman! If the heroes stay where they are the humans are soon killed (6 rounds), but one of them seems to have managed to escape into the forest.

If the heroes charge, there will be lots of noise from the pounding of horses' hooves and the mutants get to make an easy *perception* test with a +20% bonus or be *surprised*.

If the heroes charge on foot, there is less noise and the mutants make a *perception* test with a -10% penalty since they are pre-occupied with torturing their victims.

If the heroes specify they are charging silently (experienced players will do this!) then the mutants have a -20% penalty to their *perception* test.

There are six mutants but they are lousy fighters. However, the Beastman is goading them on. If the heroes manage to kill the Beastman the mutants flee immediately. If not, they fight until only 2 of them are left, and then flee regardless of what the Beastman threatens or yells. The Beastman fight till it is killed, having entered into a *Frenzy*. The PCs find nothing of value on the Beastman or mutants but do notice that they all have the same symbol on their clothing and armour (Archaon's symbol).

Needless to say, the people rescued are very grateful. They are actually two men and a woman, all are very poorly dressed and seem to be in their mid-thirties. There is an overturned cart by the side of the road and the two men immediately see to it, picking up fruit, plants and wood that has been spilled from the cart, leaving the woman to talk to the heroes.

**** If the PCs did not help, or failed to save the people, then skip to **Part 4a** immediately. ****

Margot Hiller, swamp dweller

"Thank you kind sirs! We would be food for crows if not for you! Would you like some fruit? Or firewood perhaps? We'll give you a discount!"

The heroes might ask her a few questions, and these are her responses:

"The three of us live in a small village beside the swamp, we come to these parts of the forest for fruits and firewood everyday, sometimes maybe catch a rabbit or two! Hmmm (she looks at Fredrich) you look familiar." (Fredrich has gone to this village before, on his previous task of catching the first batch of Snotlings, and he does not deny this if asked.)

"That taller one is Doren and the shorter feller is Boren, brothers they are!"

"We were just on our way back when those ugly mutants sprang up!"

If the heroes reveal that they are going to the swamp, Margot offers to be their guide as she knows it "...like the back of me hand. For a price" (Haggle and bargain till about 2gc or 40s)

Fredrich will suggest that they employ her as he did so with another guide on his first foray into the swamps. All the swamp dwellers know the swamp pretty well and wouldn't get lost. Plus, they

know which danger spots to avoid. Further, time is of the essence and they cannot afford to track through the swamp themselves, where getting lost is a distinct possibility.

Part 4: Black Water Village

The heroes and the 3 swamp dwellers Margot, Doren and Boren finally reach the village at the edge of the swamp. They proceed straight to Margot's hovel amid gawps and stares from the other swamp dwellers. Some are obviously curious but others are jealous as well, guessing that Margot will be earning a few coins from the strangers to their village. Doren and Boren proceed to their own hovel next door to put away their cart.

Margot explains that the swamp is not a place for horses and carts and Fredrich agrees, having done the same thing previously. Needless to say, if the heroes do not return then Margot would have a new cart and some fine horses! But she is not dishonest, and indebted to the heroes for saving her life, so she would rather earn their gold the proper way. She tells them that her son will care for the horses, and calls out for someone named 'Will'.

A youth appears from Margot's hovel, about 17 years old ("..found him by the road I did, folks all killed by robbers.."). He helps stable the horses behind the hovel as Margot gathers some stuff for her journey into the swamp. She brings a staff, a small sling bag and a lantern. It is approaching about 5pm and already the swamp is becoming dark as the sun hangs low in the horizon.

Margot leads them to small bridge which spans a body of slow moving water.

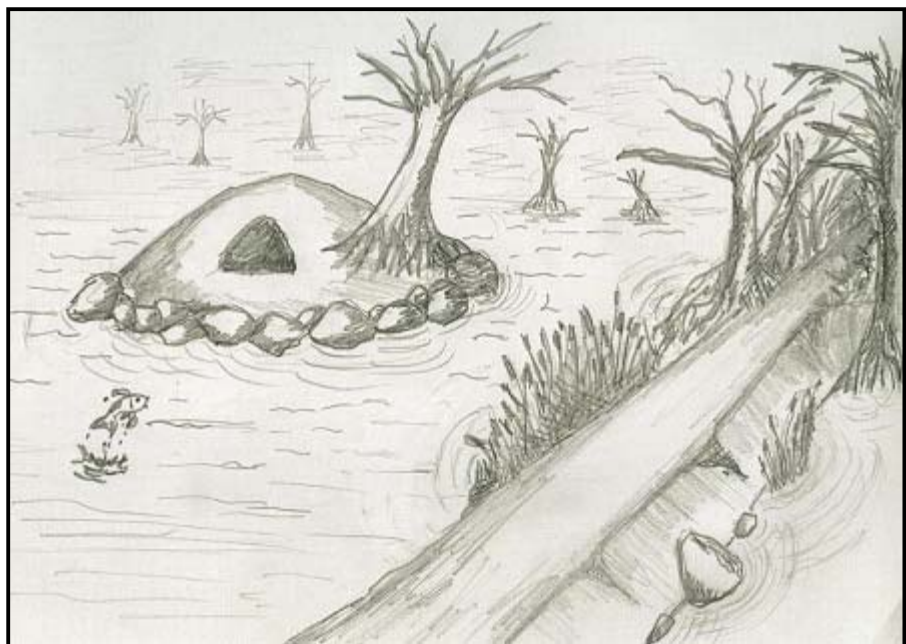
"This is where we begin, gents, and since you say that you are in a hurry, we'll take a shortcut. Just pray that we don't meet Blacktooth, or it will be a hard time of it and we may have to take a longer detour!"

If the PCs ask who Blacktooth this is Margot's response:

"Blacktooth? Oh he's a swamp troll, we've seen him once or twice but we always avoid his space and he avoids ours. Best we pass his domain while there is a little light left."

An hour later, after wading through knee high water, dry land and muddy ground, the PCs arrive at a narrow causeway, an embankment, that is about four feet across and fifty feet long.

Margot explains: "This was built by Blacktooth to keep the water in, and that's his island over there," she points to a small island with a mound and a cave "and I don't see him around, do you?"



The troll is actually hiding in the water and he is really very close to the embankment, hidden amongst a cluster of reeds, with just his snout above the water for air, much like a crocodile. As the heroes attempt to cross over the embankment he leaps up and attacks them. Although the PCs are prepared for an attack, they are still *surprised* by his startling entrance.

Blacktooth retreats if he takes more than 75% damage. He is after all, a sentient creature who is not willing to die for nothing and he swims back to his island to lick his wounds. He hurls insults at the PCs as they pass.

NOTE: If PCs are too banged up by their earlier encounter with the mutants, the GM may decide that Blacktooth is just not hungry and can be seen snoozing on his island, and the PCs pass safely.

After this encounter and the PCs are already on the other side, they take a little time to bind any wounds catch their breath. If any of them have *Sixth Sense* they may feel their being followed. If one or more of them says that they are scanning the environment, they may make a *Perception* test. On a successful test they will notice that there are tiny lights in the distance, from the direction that they came from. They may rightly deduce that they are being followed.

The PCs now have two options:

- 1) They set an ambush and fight it out with the mercenaries now.
- 2) They carry on with their mission first and deal with them later. (The mercenaries will retreat and ambush the PCs in Part 6 because it gets too dark to follow them)
- 3) Find a way to lose them. (The mercenaries will retreat and ambush the PCs in Part 6)

After this encounter proceed to Part 5.

Part 4a: Black Water Village

The PCs arrive in the village and anyone who is about just stops and stares. Seldom do people even bother coming to the village, let alone the swamp. If the PCs are not sure what to do next, Fredrich will suggest hiring one of the locals as a guide, as he himself had done when he caught the first batch of Snotlings. After asking about, a man steps forward and introduces himself as Derek.

Derek will boldly ask for 4 gold pieces, but upon as successful *Haggle*, he will settle for 1gc now and 1gc 10s upon completion of the journey. Derek explains that the swamp is not a place for horses and carts and suggests that the animals and cart be kept at his hovel. The PCs have no choice but to agree. After tying down the horses and taking the equipment they need, the PCs, Fredrich and Derek are ready to set off. Derek wisely brings a lantern as it is getting dark, and the swamp is no place to be at night without a light.

Derek leads them to small bridge which spans a body of slow moving water.

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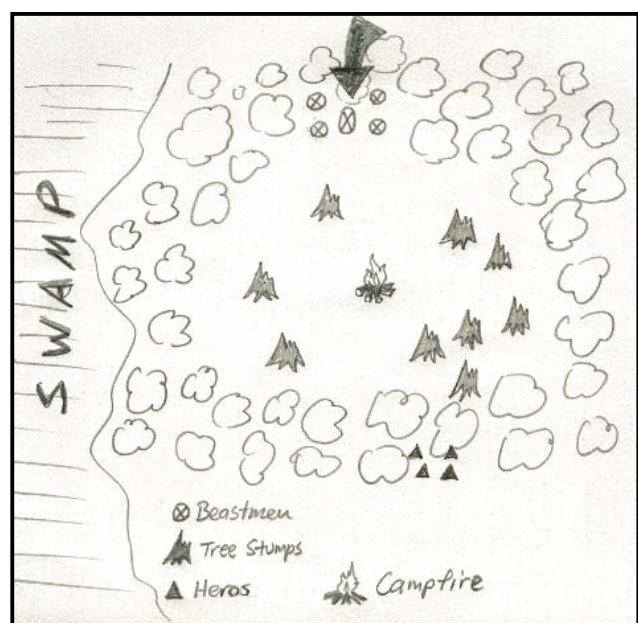
Part 5: Snotlings!

It is near midnight when Margot / Derek signals for everyone to keep silent. She / He points a finger and the PCs see firelight about 100 feet away, through a cluster of trees. The Snotling's lair is a space about 100 feet in diameter and there are about a dozen rotting tree stumps and fallen logs which the Snotlings use as shelter. In the centre of this clearing a fire pit can be seen and the majority of the creatures are now around this campfire, roasting *something* and eating it heartily. They are talking and laughing loudly in their crude language and their sound drifts over in the night air. They do not bother to post any guards whatsoever and some area already sleeping in the open, beside the fire. From where they are the PCs are well hidden out of earshot, so they can discuss their strategy if they keep their voices low.

Very soon, all the Snotlings are snoring loudly. About 30 of them have remained around the campfire, which is still burning, while the rest have crawled back into whatever hole they came from. No one really knows how many there are.

As the PCs are about to execute their plan or getting into position, have them make a *Perception* or *Sixth Sense* test. If any pass then they notice the following:

Across the Snotling's lair, opposite of the PCs position, shadowy shapes come forward. In the dying light of the campfire they see the unmistakable form of 4 Chaos Beastmen, and in their centre is a Centigor! There is a large wooden cage strapped to the Centigor's back and the beastmen are all carrying nets. The chaos party is lightly armed, the beastmen carry only hand weapons and the centigor carries a spear.



Clearly they were not expecting a fight and came here to carry off as many Snotlings as possible. Why they need to ‘harvest’ the Snotlings is anybody’s guess. The beastmen quickly start to capture Snotlings and stuff them into the cage carried by the centigor. Soon there is a lot of commotion and noise and chaos as the Snotlings realise what’s happening. A bunch of them are backed into a corner and are brandishing crude spears, ready to defend themselves. The rest are running around, screaming their heads off, and some run out of the camp, trying to escape.

The PCs now have a few options:

1. Wait for the beastmen to finish their business and leave. If they do so, the following happens: Each PC rolls a d10. On a 1, 2 or 3, anywhere between 1 to 3 Snotlings are running in their direction, trying to escape the beastmen, and the PCs may try to catch them as they run pass. (Make an Attack roll but -10% as it is dark and the Snotlings are running fast. A successful attack means the PC has grabbed the arm, leg, neck, etc of the Snotling and can put it in a sack, net, bag, cage, etc. A failed attack roll means the Snotling has run off into the darkness.)
2. Engage in combat with the beastmen. The beastmen retreat if 3 out of 5 of them are killed. The Snotlings remain around as the fighting takes place as they are too dumb to do anything else. Some even cheer and start to take sides, treating the fight as a great show!

The Snotlings then cheer and treat the PCs as their saviour and beg the PCs to take them along. If the Snotlings learn that they are to be used for Snotball, they fight even harder to be picked, leading to fisticuffs and loud arguments, and may soon lead to a mass brawl (apparently its an honour and privilege to be a Snotball!). Soon, over a hundred Snotlings are clamouring to follow the PCs. The PCs now have to find a way to get rid of all the unwanted attention and take only the 5 or 6 that they need! The PCs cannot simply make a run for it because its very dark, they WILL get lost in the swamp, and Margot / Derek are simple folk who are not as athletic as the PCs and will be unable to keep up.

If the PCs start slaughtering the Snotlings they soon have a fight on their hands as the 80 or so remaining Snotlings pick up spear, daggers and clubs to fight the ‘nasty humies’.

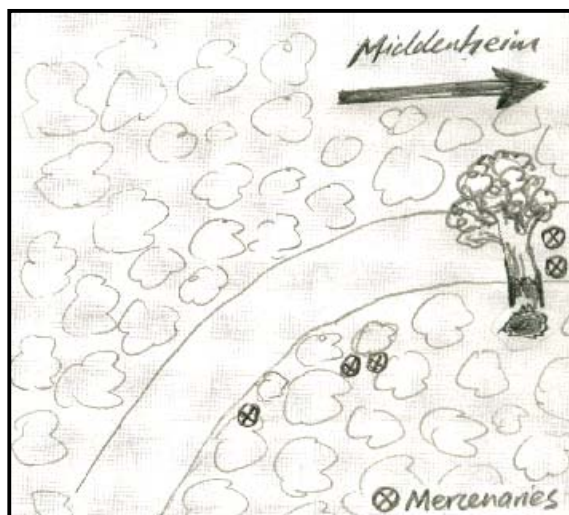
If the PCs come up with some inventive way to just take 5 or 6 Snotlings, the rest wave a sad goodbye to the ‘lucky’ Snotlings who have been picked to become a Snotball.

Part 6: Ambush!

The PCs finally get back Black Water Village at dawn and immediately ready their horses to leave (If Blacktooth is still alive, he hurls abuse and curses at them as they pass but does not attack; its too early in the morning!). Margot / Derek bids them farewell as they leave.

If the PCs had earlier saved Margot, Doren and Boren, and managed to shake off their pursuers in the swamp, go to **6a**.

If the PCs had not helped or failed to save the lives of Doren and Boren, go to **6b**.



If the PCs had engaged in combat and killed the mercenaries in the swamp, go to **Part 7** now.

Part 6a

The PCs travel no more than 20 minutes down the road when they see Doren and Boren hurrying in the opposite direction towards them. Doren waves frantically at the PCs and asks them to stop.

Doren breathlessly proceeds to speak: “A group of 5 men came to the village yesterday after you went into the swamp and they too hired a guide and followed you into the swamp. They came back late in the night and then left immediately. Both of us were going to the forest as usual to gather fruits when we spied them round the bend ahead, waiting in ambush! We came to warn you!”

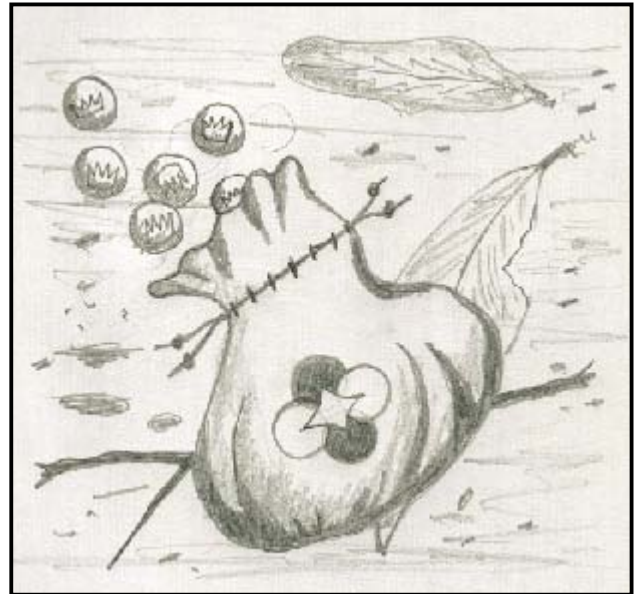
The mercenaries are overconfident and have earlier ignored Doren and Boren, taking them to be simple and stupid swamp dwellers who know nothing.

If the PCs decide to engage and fight the mercenaries, they may surprise the mercenaries given proper planning, and it’s a fight to the finish, the mercenaries fighting to the last man. Upon searching the mercenaries’ corpses, they find a pouch of 50GCs. (The pouch has a marking which will be significant later in Part 8)

If the PCs decide to avoid the fight, they will have to trek through the forest to circumnavigate the ambush. This would require at least two or three successful *Navigate* skill tests. If successful, they will no longer be pursued by the mercenaries, who will assume they have perished in the swamp. But this will have implications later on in Part 8.

Part 6b

The PCs travel about 20 minutes when they round a bend and see a fallen tree across the road, about 20 feet away. If they have been aware that someone is following them and managed to lose them, they are right to be suspicious. Before anyone can react, bolts fly from the direction of the fallen tree, as well as from the side and rear! It’s an ambush! The mercenaries have *Surprise* on their side. After firing their bolts, the mercenaries immediately charge from their cover and engage in close combat. It’s a fight to the finish, the mercenaries fighting to the last man. Upon searching the mercenaries’ corpses, they find a pouch of 50GCs. (The pouch has a marking which will be significant later in Part 8)



Part 7: Success

After all these encounters the PCs finally reach Middenheim in the late morning. Luckily the traffic has thinned down and they do not need to wait long before entering the city (GMs don’t forget the gate toll ☺ If GMs want to be nasty the PCs might find it hard to get by the gates with live Snotlings in tow, but a few GCs should settle things). They all go as fast as they can to the stadium. People stare and gawp as they pass by, with the Snotlings laughing and making lewd faces and shouting out obscene vulgarities.

The party finally reaches the stadium and Fredrich guides them to one of the many speciality stores and shops beneath the stadium stands. The shop sign says ‘Gunthar’s Fine Leather Works’. It’s an open shop with no doors or outer walls, with just a shutter to pull down at the end of the day. Fredrich proceed to speak to Gunthar and a moment later Gunthar steps out of the shop and drags the Snotlings inside (who are still laughing, singing and uttering obscenities).

Fredrich turns to the PCs and grins broadly: “Jobs done! Well done lads! Now get yourself washed up and meet me back here 2 hours past noon, we’ll have our balls and when we collect payment, I’m sure Mr. Nickerby would like to meet you. As for me, a meal and a drink seem good!”

Part 8: The Olde Ball Game

At 2 past noon, the PCs meet Fredrich at the Leather Works as promised and there they see Fredrich speaking to a well dressed gentleman who is flanked by an aide as well as two bodyguards. He is obviously a foreigner and his dressing and manners mark him out to be Bretonnian. Fredrich introduces him as Mr. Charles Nickerby.

Mr. Nickerby is very, very pleased: “Gentle Sirs you have my thanks and my gratitude, for without your timely assistance it would not be thus possible for this fine tradition of Middenheim to continue. Please, be my guests in the box.” The PCs would be unable to refuse as doing so would be seen as being very rude (Fredrich reminds them strongly if they are reluctant)

Everyone follows Charles Nickerby and they are soon seated in the main VIP Box, which oversees the whole stadium and gives an excellent view of the playing field. More than 70% of the stadium is filled and more spectators are coming in by the minute. Various entertainers are doing their best to please the crowd and the better ones receive coins thrown by the appreciative audience. Vendors move up and down the aisles selling drinks and snacks.

Charles Nickerby is seated in the front row of the box and various people of his entourage occupy all the best seats. The PCs are left to sit at the back of the box, which nonetheless have cushioned seats, something they are not used to!

If the PCs managed to defeat the mercenaries, go to **8a**.

If they avoided fighting or confronting the mercenaries altogether, go to **8b**.

Part 8a

The Snotball finals finally get underway and during the game one of them notices another VIP Box with spectators inside. One of them is glaring angrily at their direction (they ask around and easily find out that the man is Baron Juergan Podolski! But what they notice that is even more alarming is the fact that his bodyguards are wearing uniforms with the same markings as the pouch they found on the bodies of the mercenaries! It seems that they have unwittingly made a powerful enemy by helping Charles Nickerby. Proceed to **8b**.

Part 8b

The PCs enjoy the whole afternoon at the stadium and have a good laugh as they see the Snotlings being kicked about. In the end The Black Crows – a team sponsored by Charles Nickerby, wins the cup and he is doubly pleased, as is everyone in the VIP Box. He is in such high spirits that he invites the PCs to his residence (it is actually a luxurious Inn, but he rented ALL the rooms for a whole year!) for dinner and the whole entourage proceeds to the Inn for an evening of good dining and fine wine. . .

. . . The End?



A Game of Snotball

Adventure Hooks

- ❖ Charles Nickerby is going up North for business and hires the PCs as extra bodyguards for the trip. Along the way they run into trouble either from Archaon or his lieutenants, or from the forces of Black Orc Warlord Grimgor Ironhide. Needless to say, the journey North is cut short and the PCs must find a way to get back to Middenheim with Charles Nickerby. Back at Middenheim, they must then help defend the city against the forces of evil, bringing them right into the thick of the action in the Storm of Chaos storyline.
- ❖ Two days after the tournament, the Captain of the city guard approaches the PCs. The Snotlings used in the tournament earlier were accidentally let loose and have escaped down the sewers. Through threat (illegally bringing in snotlings, etc) or reward, the PCs must now venture into the underbelly of Middenheim, the Ulricsberg to recapture or kill the Snotlings as they are considered a pest. They eventually catch the Snotlings but also cross paths with Clan Skryre, ultimately causing their Doom Hemisphere to fail to explode fully, thus saving the city.
- ❖ Charles Nickerby is tired of life up North and is going to go back to Bretonnia. He hires the PCs as extra guards for his long trip South, thus ensuring a long journey full of adventure.
- ❖ An agent of the Empire approaches the PCs. He has heard of their little exploits with the Snotlings and is very curious to learn about the mutants and beastmen that they encountered. Upon close questioning and reflection, the agent realises that the mutants and beastmen are part of Archaon's army, perhaps an advance party or scouts. He then employs the PCs and together they will seek out and destroy this band of Chaos forces.
- ❖ Fredrich suggests that they go back to the swamp and drain Blacktooth's pond, chase him away or kill him, and ransack his cave.

----- END -----