

Ro-Tek Brutes

The rules allowing modifications of players did not specify that these players must be flesh and blood, and several entrepreneurial individuals took this golden opportunity to spend their credits on putting together some new robot teams. Existing teams such as the Chromium Chargers were all well and good, but these versatile and adaptable robots were expensive both to create and maintain, and suffered from being merely good at all things instead of excelling at any one.

Ro-tek is a conglomerate that was formed from several smaller, more illicit organisations who wanted to gain some legitimacy from association with the DGB and all that entailed. Their proposal was simple – put together an elite team of specially tailored robots – or ‘mechanites’ as these beings would come to be known, and let them wipe the floor with the competition. The team was created far more with force and endurance in mind than fitnesses and ball skill, and the ‘Brutes’ name was quickly earned several times over. However, the expenditure in new and replacement parts from all this pounding quickly mounted, and the Ro-Tek board had a rethink. The new-look Brutes team that emerged was lethally efficient, and rapidly became one of the major players in the leagues. Others followed their example, and now there are dozens of Mechanite teams, each with their own distinctive speciality and set of skills, being cheered on the length and breadth of the GCPS.

Picking a Team

A Mechanite team does not have a fixed player roster to choose from like most teams. Instead, use the rules below to design the players you want.

However, the small workshops and tight budgets to which these techs work put some limitations on what they can turn out for a match. Much as they’d love to have a wide array of top-of-the-line specialist players, they know that it’s simply beyond their means. Guards and Strikers simply take more time and effort to build, and so they inevitably have to settle for some lesser players to be able to field something that actually looks vaguely like a team.

To reflect this, for every Guard or Striker in a Mechanite team, there must also be at least one Jack. During a league, a Mechanite team Coach may add a new Guard or Striker only if the total number of Guards and Strikers already in the team is less than the current number of Jacks. They can always add new Jacks.

When you have created your players, you have a 100mc budget to buy as many as you want for your team. You may **not** buy Coaching Dice (Mechanites lack the appropriate team tactics software). You may purchase other team bonuses such as DreadBall cards, cheerleaders, assistant coaches and so on at their normal cost.

Building Bots

For those who lack the stomach or the funds to engage in biological manipulation and mutation, and all of the troubling side effects and potential mistakes, there are always the cheaper and easier options of customisation available to robots.

Long before humans learned how to tinker with their own inner workings they were building artificial copies of themselves. The crude beginnings eventually led to extraordinarily skilled machines that are often more capable than the humans who built them.

Robot teams are of course a regular feature of the DreadBall leagues and have been for some time. However, these teams usually tend to be standardised factory line assemblies – uniform chassis with identical features and capabilities that are designed to switch between roles and be reasonably competent at each one. Sometimes however a coach will want to take a more bespoke approach, sacrificing the usual versatility of robot players for the opportunity to create tailor-made machines to fulfil each role on the pitch perfectly. It's a gamble, but one that several coaches with slightly deeper pockets than the average have taken with no small degree of success.

The Mechanics of Perfection

A Coach can create one or more different types of robot player using the following steps.

1. Decide on the role you want the robot to play in by selecting its Basic Coding. You will see that this will restrict some options later.
2. Choose one option from each of: locomotion, body, and head – these will help to make the player unique.
3. Select 2 arms – one for each side as you might expect. Though robots can theoretically have as many as they like, the DGB limits modifications to two to keep things reasonably fair (and sane!).
4. Finally, if you choose, you may add as much optional programming as you like, subject to the restrictions on player type that each one comes with. These will help to individualise each player further.

The cost of each player is worked out as you go along as follows:

- If a new part adds or improves a stat or ability then you must pay for it.
- If a new part does not add or improve a stat or ability then you get it for free.

By the time you have added the cost of the last programming option you select you will have calculated the total cost of the robot.

A robot's final stat line is made up of the stats and abilities listed in the separate parts. If the same stat is listed for two different parts, keep the better value. For example, if part A says Strength 3+ and part B says Strength 4+ then use 3+. All other stats and abilities attached to both parts are used. There is no benefit for having the same ability twice.

The model parts for the robot player can be assembled in the same order as you make the choices, below. Of course, this gives a great opportunity for you to get really creative with your models.

Basic Coding

At the very core of a DreadBall robot is its role coding. This defines its physical build quality and parameters as well as its tactical outlook and basic strategy software suite.

Type	Role	Stat/Ability changes	Cost
Guard	Guard	Guard role bonuses	4
Jack	Jack	Jack role bonuses	2
Striker	Striker	Striker role bonuses	4

Locomotion

There are of course many ways in which a robot may get about, from wheels to multi jointed legs. Differences tend to be more pronounced in form rather than function, but a canny coach knows the choice can be crucial.

Type	Role	Stat/Ability changes	Cost
Quad wheels	Any	Move 5, Speed 5+, Steady	4
Monowheel	Any	Move 6, Speed 5+	4
Quad legs	Any	Move 4, Speed 5+, Steady	2
Bird legs	Jack or Striker	Move 6, Speed 5+, Duck & Weave	6
Armoured legs	Jack or Guard	Move 5, Speed 5+	3

Chassis

The Chassis is where most of the mechanics and electronic control systems of a robot are housed, and it will consequently tend to be the densest and most well protected part of the machine, regardless of role. Further modifications are then made to tailor the robot to its position, making it fast, strong or agile enough to fulfil its duties on the pitch.

Type	Role	Stat/Ability changes	Cost
Body A	Any	Strength 4+	2
Body B	Jack or Striker	Strength 5+, Speed 4+	3
Body C	Any	Strength 5+	1
Body D	Jack or Guard	Strength 4+, Can't Feel A Thing	5

Head

Speed of reaction and Skill is not so much a physical thing as a programming refinement, and this is traditionally housed in the head. This may seem like a throwback to the humans who built it, but in fact it is a practical decision. Shortening the distance that information needs to travel between sensors and processing has two main advantages. Firstly, it cuts down the chance of damage interfering with the information flow as there is less cabling to interrupt. Secondly, a shorter physical distance to travel means less wiring to travel through, and this can reduce the response time by milliseconds. Sometimes milliseconds count.

Type	Role	Stat/Ability changes	Cost
Cranehead	Jack or Guard	Skill 5+, Gotcha!	5
Quadeye	Any	Skill 4+, Speed 4+	4
Radar	Jack or Striker	Skill 3+, Fragile	5
Slim	Any	Skill 4+	2
Tank	Jack or Guard	Skill 5+	1

Arms

Mortal players are restricted to what training, drugs or the compatibility of tissue will grant them in terms of arm strength and dexterity. Robots have no such restriction, and the variety of arms available help to really tailor each one into a perfect player. From delicate manipulators designed to perfectly catch a fast thrown ball to the brute force of hammers and rams to smash opponents out of the way, it is here that the true nature of a robot may quickly be discerned.

Choose two from the following list. A Jack must take at least one of the arms marked with an asterisk.

Type	Role	Stat/Ability changes	Cost
Wrecking ball	Jack or Guard	Strength 3+	5
Air cannon	Jack or Guard	Shove	2
Grab	Jack or Guard	Gotcha!	5
Hammer	Jack or Guard	Pile-Driver	3
Ram	Jack or Guard	Strength 4+, Shove	5
Hand*	Any	Skill 4+	2
Launcher*	Jack or Striker	Long Arms	4
Claw*	Any	Skill 4+	2
Glove*	Jack or Striker	A Safe Pair Of Hands	3

Note that Long Arms is allowed to robots with Launchers even though the ability is normally restricted to Judwan players.

Programming

Once a robot has been assembled, its performance can be slightly tweaked by adding new software to alter the way it uses that body. This ranges from different ways to allocate and use its available power to upgraded awareness of opposing player's likely trajectories.

Type	Role	Stat/Ability changes	Cost
Damage control	Any	Quick Recovery	4
Tactics Upgrade	Jack	Run Interference	2
Situational awareness	Jack or Striker	Alert	1
Motion focus	Any	Stretch	2

Robot Armour

This is not an option, but a reflection of the player's role on the pitch. Guards have the heaviest armour, followed by Jacks and finally Strikers. The protective value of the armour for each role is fixed by strict regulations from the DGB, though the exact shape is not.

The value of a robot's armour in the game is based on his role. See page 36 of the main rules.

Modelling Armour

In modelling terms, you should use whatever looks appropriate for your model. You also need the different roles to be obvious. As a guideline, you could try using the armoured shoulders and extra chest plates for a Guard, just the shoulders for a Jack and neither for a Striker.