In the beginning, there were the Primordials, and they forged Creation and all that it is from the untamed Wyld. The mountains, the rivers, the plains, the forests, the swamps, and all things that live there. Upon the completion of their great work, they created the Incarnae and the gods to rule over it as the Primordials retreated to heaven to bask in the greatness of their work, of themselves, and in the greatest of their creations, the games of divinity.

But the gods grew bitter and jealous at the way the Primordials commanded them, the utter disregard for all things not them and the cruel whims handed down from on high. And so the Incarnae and the gods rebelled against their creators in the only way they knew how. They took the games of divinity and challenged the Primordials to a match. Oh, there were wars, and champions. A team of 300 chosen specifically by the Sun himself to assist him in his battles, ten times that many blessed and taught by the Greater Elemental Dragons.

Eventually, the Incarnae were victorious, and took heaven and the games of divinity for themselves. But before they left the world in the hands of the Ballers they exalted, they shared with Creation a somewhat lesser version of the games, a version mere mortal minds could comprehend even if they would never truly master it without the help of a greater power.

And that is the story of how basketball was invented.

SHARDS OF THE EXALTED DREAM : CREATION JAM

(or, Exalted, Shut Up And Jam Gaiden)

+1000 cp

Origins

Balorian World Tour

In the wake of the Incarnae's final game of B-ball against the Primordials, a number of beings from outside reality have taken notice of the game and decided to try their hands at it. The result is the Balorian World Tour, a team of B-ball players made up of Raksha, some of the most handsome, cinematic, and stylish players you could find. Their actual skill in the game leaves something to be desired, however, but their… unique style of play gives them enough advantages to be worthy opponents anyways.

Shogunate All Star

When the Solar Ballers began to lose their grip on sanity due to the sheer excess they lived in after helping the Incarnae serve the Primordials at B-ball, it was the Dragonbloods who served them. Weaker, true, but there is strength in numbers and that is certainly something the Shogunate All Stars have. You are a member of one of the Shogunate's five teams, be it as a Baller in the court or in a more executive position.

Sidereal Manager

The Sidereals are competent at B-ball, make no mistake, but their true calling has always been information. Be it acquiring as much as possible to direct the training of the other Ballers in the most efficient manner, changing out players to exploit the weaknesses of other teams, or simply playing with nonstop feints, information and disinformation are a ball that are very firmly in the Sidereal's court. You are most likely assigned as a watcher/guardian to a high ranking Dragonblood, making sure nothing untoward happens to them, or are actively hunting down the Solars and other threats to Creation.

100 cp - Solar Baller

For 3000 years, the Solar Ballers ruled the courts, served their foes at B-ball, and were fair rulers to the world. But from deep within their prison, the Yozi and the Neverborn concocted a plot to strike out at them somehow, and in the end the Solar Ballers were betrayed by their Sidereal and Dragonblood subject. There are precious few Solar Ballers left, and you are one amongst their number. We can only hope that you do not damn yourself in some way at the behest of the fallen Primordials.

Perks

Balorian World Tour

100 cp - Chaotic Prince Graces The Court

The ballers of the Balorian World Tour, for all their skill at the game, are not Ballers. In fact, they are not even human, though I must admit that they do an excellent job of pretending otherwise when they wish to do so. They are creatures of the Wyld, the lands outside Creation, they are Raksha. As beings of pure chaos, their B-ball style is appropriately nonsensical. You have a talent for unexpected things, doing something completely crazy like figuring out the riskiest move to use in any given scenario, and then stunning everyone by actually doing it instead of simply passing it to the next baller. For the exact same reason, this also allows you to be an extremely disruptive element on the court, able to see the patterns the opposing team falls into, the narrative they attempt to create - only to have the ball smacked out of their hands by yours truly.

200 cp - Triumphant Hero Style

Everybody may love an underdog, but there's also something to be said for a knight in shining armor arriving to rescue you and your B-ball team from being served at the last moment. And the Balorian World Tour loves nothing more than a good story - thus, you are now stronger when falling into a specific role in one such story. A defender might be stronger when a woman stands behind him, relying on him, trusting in him to keep her safe, while an attacker would grow in power and wrath when his opponent stands between him and that same woman. The more you lean into this the harder it becomes to change, but the various benefits are worth it. And, of course, it doesn't matter how badly you play the role because if the crowd is cheering for you, you'll be empowered anyways.

400 cp - Wyld Shaped Form

A Raksha is a story, and the form they take is in no small part defined by that story. A Fae who wishes to be the Knight In Shining Armor all but HAS to wear that same armor, lest he not fit the narrative he wishes to tell. Interestingly enough, it would seem that the story you wish to tell is a Comedy, and as a result you have gained access to a set of charms that allow you to do a number of interesting things to your own body. Stretching your limbs to many times their length or even popping them off when someone pulls them off, sending yourself flying as a dodge instead of actually taking damage from the blow, a similar dodge that causes you to become as thin as paper for a brief moment - and of course, the ability to pull a number of simple objects from seemingly nowhere for the purposes of telling, or being, a joke. It's an unusual way to go about it, but comedy characters tend to be oddly durable. It would be a tragedy otherwise, after all.

600 cp - Neverending Story Of B-ball

One of the greatest secrets of the Balorian World Tour's success was the secret power hidden within Balor's eyes. So long as he was on the field, time did not quite flow properly - while he watched the clock it would never tick forwards, and the game would never end. By itself, and under your own power, this technique is barely noticeable against most foes, and completely unusable against others. However, as long as you have the essence to power this, you can drag a game out into a theoretically infinite amount of time and only allow it to end once you've very firmly served your foes. Please keep in mind that there are other uses for this technique - perhaps you could gaze upon an ally to speed up their desperate grab for the ball instead of slowing down the clock?

Shogunate All Stars

100 cp - Enemy Crushing Unification

The Dragonblood Ballers have never had the overwhelming power the Chosen of The Undunked Sun can reach or the sheer variety of shapes and abilities of the Lunars. No, from the very outset they were designed to be weaker, and to compensate for this weakness they were designed to overwhelm their foes with sheer numbers. There is a reason that the Shogunate All Stars have five teams, and it's not because they're spreading their resources thin. Specific to the Terrestrial Ballers is a special set of techniques that allow them to enhance their fellow Dragonbloods powers and abilities. This isn't very strong in and of itself, but when it's replicated over a dozen times then it becomes a serious issue for your foes. You can actually take this one step further, having acquired a number of variations on these same techniques that have a second potential boost built into them - a set bonus if you will, for when five Dragonblood, one of each element, activate the charm in unison then its effects will be amplified. Depending on the specific charms, you could even gain multiple boosts by having the five different types of Dragonblood fill the five positions on a B-ball team.

200 cp - Ancestor Observing Stance

For the Dragonbloods, family is of the utmost importance. Their greatest insults often revolve around the implication that one's mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and so on would be ashamed of what they are doing, or how poorly they are doing it. Against people who aren't Dragonbloods the insult falls a little flat in comparison, but that's simply because they don't respect their momma the same way you do. To counter these insults, you have learned to channel the rage born of these insults into your game, running faster and hitting harder in proportion to how badly they have insulted your family. With an arrogant enough opponent even a child who had never touched a ball before could stand equal to some of the Shogunate All Star's most elite Ballers, and utterly serve the fool. If you can stand to let them insult your family for that long, at least. Working yourself into a right rage to get this boost is not conducive to letting them continue speaking or them having a jaw that isn't broken after all.

400 cp - Stadium Raising Flurry

When serving your opponents, there is no better time to do it but now, and no better place than upon their home court. It doesn't matter if said home court is an absolute ruin that you will need to repair to be worthy of hosting your magnificence. As such, you will need the skills to do so - in addition to being a B-baller of great skill and style, you are also a craftsman of even greater skill, able to create an entire stadium from the ground up inside of a week through the use of your charms. Meru, unfortunately, is more than a mere stadium - you will also need to know more than a bit about First Quarter artifacts and similar forgotten technologies, and while I cannot say you are skilled with those, you do tend to be extraordinarily lucky.

600 cp - Divine Right Of B-ball

From an outsider's perspective, it must look ridiculous that an entire empire was founded on the results of a basketball game and fell on the results of one as well. It must seem absurd that when the world was invaded by aliens, they would choose B-ball as their weapon of choice. And yet, that is simply how Creation is, has been, and likely always will be. And now you can take part of that with you - while basketball may not retain its status as the divine game in later worlds, you'll still find it to be oddly important. And by that I mean that you can challenge people to B-ball games for the fate of the world and they will react as any citizen of Creation would, with the declaration that you are about to be utterly served. It should be noted however, that while one can use this as a replacement to violence in a number of cases, that 'unused' talent will usually translate into skill at the game, so as to not leave them completely unarmed in this battle of wits.

Sidereal Manager

100 cp - Fivefold Distraction Method

The Sidereal Managers were never really meant to go onto the court - it's even in their name, while all other Ballers are known first and foremost as Ballers, the Sidereals are known far and wide as Managers. To aid you in the battles and games that occur before one ever steps onto the court, you have a number of fake personalities that you can pick up or abandon at the drop of a hat. A hectic and rushed style, a highly aggressive and confrontational technique, a rather flirty or possibly seductive stance, a highly technical, precise, and an utter rules lawyer persona, and a devil may care attitude to accomplish your goal whatever the cost. You may of course create even more false emotions to suit your needs, or even enhance existing one's, but these basic five also correlate to a B-ball technique focusing on speed, power, distraction, fouls, and risk respectively. One of them, identity and style both, is your actual speciality on account of being born of the specific star that exalted you into a Baller, and is thus more effective and easier for you to use both on the court and off of it.

200 cp - Baller Raising Method

As befitting a manager, your greatest strength should lie not in your own skills on the court, but in your ability to bring together a team, to raise them up into greatness, to, well, manage them. From small things like being able to brew or find the perfect mug of coffee, to figuring out the strengths and weakness of your plays and how best to train them, to how to advertise and draw a crowd, a Sidereal Manager is a one man army that ensures that any small details or issues that might raise up are served in the same way your team will soon serve your foes. And perhaps most importantly, you know how to do all of these things before your players even realize that there is an issue. Perhaps one day you will grow such that they question if they even have a manager, and that the stadium is merely automated in some manner?

400 cp - Manyfold Game Mastery

While the Sidereal's place in history has always been to be the right hand of greatness, calling them such implies a level of weakness on their part - that they are not great, that they are not strong. This is untrue. Perhaps on the field of battle or on the court a Sidereal may fall short of the raw prowess of Solar or a Lunar, but they have their own specialities to consider. Trickery, deception, misdirection, when one can reach out and touch the strings of fate themselves suddenly something as simple as physical might seems unimportant by comparison. In a competition they cannot win, the Sidereal have learned to change the rules. Be it throwing the ball out of bounds and returning with a solid stone ball, striking it with a bat or perhaps even a paddle, the act of mixing the rules and techniques of other games is the Sidereals favorite basketball technique. The sheer chaos such a thing can potentially cause is as glorious to watch as it is disruptive to the opponent. Now, go ahead and special summon an extra player from your deck, you need the backup.

600 cp - Last Dunk Of B-Ball

Perhaps one of the greatest reasons why the Solar Ballers fell was because of you. Or, rather, your absence. The Sidereal Managers ceased to manage, and so the Solars were caught entirely off guard and unprepared when the Usurpation of Ownage occurred. And you were very likely one of the ones that arranged for every Sidereal Manager to suddenly go on vacation at the exact same time, who arranged for the Dragonblooded Ballers most willing to betray the Solars to be assigned to their inner guards. With a single piece of paperwork, you may change the fate of nations. By reviewing the sales of concessions, you can determine the weakest member on a team. By trading a player from one team to another, you can save a town from or damn them to being "visited" by the Balorian World Tour. The strings of fate are but an instrument, and you play it with the same skill and grace that the Solar Ballers once served the Primordials. And perhaps most importantly, you are skilled beyond measure at using these things to cast down those who no longer deserve it - or perhaps to raise up those that do.

Solar Baller

100 cp - Infuriation Inducement Method

The Solar Ballers were without equal, in all ways shapes and forms superior to all other Ballers, Gods, andmortals alike with the possible exception of the Primordials and Incarnae - and given that they were a critical part of the Incarnae's strategy against the Primordials, even that is not certain. For 3000 years, Solars walked the walk, and now I give to you the other half of this - the ability to talk the talk. When you wish to be, you have the potential to be one of the most arrogant, most condescending, most infuriating people in all of Creation. Insulting something or someone - or their mother - at length for hours is an utterly trivial task. More impressive than that is how your skills seem to rise slightly when you do so. It's one thing to call someone bad at basketball, it's entirely another to call them and their entire family an embarrassment to B-ball. While dunking a priceless artifact into a trash can from the roof of the tallest building in the city. Excessive? Yeah, probably. But oh so very Solar.

200 cp - Excellence Imparting Game

To serve your lessers is all well and good, but one should always seek to serve with a purpose. To drive the arrogance from those who claim greatness with no claim to it, or to pass on a small fragment of that same greatness to those who deserve but do not truly believe that they could ever hold it. Ultimately, those who are served by you are also those who are schooled, for you have the power to make their loss educational. Whether it's taking some street child and turning them into a B-ball champion, or a regiment of guards and having them hold ground against a tour of Fae, your capacity to teach others should never be questioned. It may be true that you specialize in B-ball, but if you wished to impart your wisdom on other topics it would be well within your remit to do so. The light of the sun shines upon your brow, and so you shall illuminate those less fortunate than you.

400 cp - Perfection Incarnating Montage

When the Solar Ballers fell, precious few of their number managed to escape. Great C is the last of the known Solars, and he was forced to leave his friends and allies behind to be utterly owned in far too many one sided matches. But escape he did, and so too did he promise vengeance. To do that, however, he - and you, for that matter - would need to be far greater in skill and prowess. And so you train. You train until it feels as though your limbs will fall off from running and dribbling so much, and then you keep going. The aspect of the Undunked Sun you most align with is the sheer perfection of his skills, and so to do you have the potential to grow to that height - and, perhaps, beyond. There are no limits on your skill at B-ball, merely on the time you have to devote to them. Perhaps one day you will be a match for the entirety of the Shogunate All-Stars… without accidentally committing suicide in order to win.

600 cp - Celestial Supremacy Of B-ball

There exists a technique. A specific style of dunking. More theoretical than fact. The Shimantic Dunk. A dunk so perfect that even the Undunked Sun has never performed it, a dunk so perfect that many a mortal would simply drop dead from witnessing it, knowing that they would never again see true glory. In the past, lesser versions of this technique were used to power machines, trapping a vortex of the essence of pure B-ball inside a machine in order to motivate it to work. Such things held great power, but were known to be… temperamental. Attempting to dunk such a thing often had disastrous consequences. Still, you know how to make them, and how to make more than a few machines that run on them. Perhaps you shall create a robot for you to train against as you seek to refine the Shimatic Dunk into an even purer form?

Items

Balorian World Tour

100 cp - Gossamer Silk Threads

Gossamer is a material made of nothing but hopes and dreams, as immaterial as clouds and spidersilk, and a tiny fragment of the Wyld that the Fae have learned to use to craft props for their narrative, such as the team uniforms of the Balorian Would Tour - uniforms you now have a copy of. Normally they would be relatively simple but of exceedingly high quality, but these were made by the Fair Folk during a time which they desired to style all over their foes. Accordingly, the clothes can shapeshift to a limited degree, taking on the colors and shape of any uniform you could think of, from the ragtag look of modern Solars to the armorlike uniform of the Shogunate. They are also exceedingly comfortable no matter the shape, and will conveniently clean themselves if left 'offscreen' for a few moments.

200 cp - Great Concessions

Tell me something, what is a game without an audience? And what is an audience without snacks? That's where this comes in, a virus most pestilent and terrifying, taken from the Underworld and given to the Fae to help their World Tour serve all of Creation. When unleashed, this magical disease seeks out all sources of food within its grasp and transforms them from whatever hale and hearty meal they may have been, and replaces it with concessions - that is, hot dogs and soda and fries, and the occasional desert, all the sorts of things one might have with them to watch a game. The food made this way has next to no nutritional value and is mildly addictive, and is probably the only reason the Balorian Would Tour ever had any fans to watch their games - kickass snacks.

400 cp - Behemoth Brute Backup

Against normal mortals, or even your average Baller, there's very little that could stop a Fae from doing whatever they please. But against Great C, or the entire might of the Shogunate? It wouldn't be enough. That's why they created these monstrous stars to serve their foes instead of actually playing themselves. For every win these five behemoths achieve, the losing team loses as small portion of their skill at B-ball, and the behemoths gain it. Losing similarly causes them to get worse, but they'd have to lose the same number of times as they'd won for their stolen skill to be fully returned. They can also transfer this skill to you or someone of your choosing if you ever do decide to serve someone personally and want an extra edge.

600 cp - Freehold Stadium

While the World Tour was formed specifically because many members wanted to go into Creation, there exist amongst its members, those who joined before anyone ever thought to go on tour. Those who played the game for the love of the game, rather than to be seen as a rival to the Solars or the Shogunate. And this, a singular, lone B-ball stadium out in the Wyld that surrounds creation, is where they practiced. For now, it is empty - the Balor is out on tour, after all. Still, should he be owned by the unbridled might of the Ballers of Creation, it is here that he will retreat… only to find that you have stolen his home court from him. At that point, another tour may be assembled at your whim - though, you may need to wait a while, as the Fae will likely be either flush with victory or sulking in defeat and will need time to return to normal.

Shogunate All Stars

100 cp - Five Basketballs of Jade

To be perfectly honest, these are almost more trophies than actual basketballs but you now possess five of them, made from one of the five main kinds of jade and with trace amounts of yellow jade as part of their detailing. Each one of them corresponds to one of the five kinds of Dragonbloods, and when on the court those Dragonbloods will find their B-ball charms and techniques flowing slightly easier. That said, the true value of these balls is that they can be used as the material to create any number of Artifacts that will also serve you to serve your opponents. Be they shoes that increase your physical speed or a headband that increases your mental speed, the balls can take on the shape of one such Artifact for up to five days before becoming inert. These balls replenish at the end of each month.

200 cp - Creation-Spanning Audience

In the days of old, when the Solar Ballers ruled over all the courts of Creation, there existed a system built into Meru, the greatest court ever built. A broadcast system, designed so that every last Solar, Lunar, Sideral, Dragonblooded, God and mortal in all of creation could see the matches held in Meru no matter where they were. It was badly damaged when Meru fell out of the sky during the Ownage, but has since been repaired. And you, my friend, are the one that the Shogunate chose to be its operator. While the system as a whole is likely too big for you to uproot and run off with, a smaller version of the system has also been made available to you. It covers a mere fourth of creation, a still respectable amount even if it lacks the grandeur of the Solars of the First Quarter - though, given they were cast down for how excessive their grandeur became, perhaps that is a good thing?

400 cp - Five Jade Basketball

The Five Jade Basketball is a symbol of unity for the dragonblooded ballers, one that performs its task poorly given how divided they currently are. The Shogunate All Stars are not one team, but five. But the disrespect shown to this ball was able to bring them together in their time of need, and so not all is lost. The Five Jade Basketball is not something that can be bought or stolen, it must be earned, it must be won. It must be dunked. For now, it is yours. Try not to lose it, lest you bring great shame upon your family.

When this ball is attuned to a baller and brought onto the court, not only is their ability to lead amplified, but the rest of the team's ability to follow is also enhanced. This creates an unprecedented level of unity between the players that leaves even the bond between the sun and the moon in awe, turning what may very well be a ragtag army or a broken and fractured team with players from five rival clans into true All Stars. As one last boon, with the expenditure of essence it is possible to transfer skill and talent from one player to another for the course of a game. You could make your fastest Baller slower and your slowest Baller faster, or take the experience of your benchwarmers and funnel it into creating an even greater Baller to lead you to victory.

600 cp - Referee Of Creation

In the heart of the Imperial City lies a manse that no one can enter. It is the home of the Referee of Creation, the most perfect arbiter of the rules of B-ball that the Solars could create to prevent each other from cheating and to create a “fair” game. As if any game against an incarnation of perfection and literally anyone else could be fair. Still, a single foul from the Spectral Referee would be enough to disable all of the cheating techniques the Balorian Would Tour uses to win their games or nullify any techniques that a Sidereal Manager might attempt to use to change the rules, and a Solar Baller wouldn’t fare much better as the center of its attention. The trick is of course, calling upon him. And yet, by some miracle, you have just enough sway with this bastion of B-ball that he should actually allow you into his home - Actually convincing him to help you after the Shogunate held such a dishonorable series of matches during the Ownage would likely require a second miracle.

Sidereal Manager

100 cp - Immaculate Scribe's Tools

While a Sidereal would be a shame to his family for a dozen generations if he could not play basketball, there are other, almost as important tasks that you should be turning your hands to. One such task is to prepare your Solar masters - er, your Dragonblood business partners to receive the worship and praise of their adoring fans. You now possess a pleasant and high quality if somewhat ordinary suit, the kind one could play B-ball in but also acceptable for a managerial position such as yours. From within the pockets of this outfit you can draw forth a seemingly endless supply of paper and writing implements. The variety you can call forth is great and should never leave you wanting, but with a mote of essence you can create more complex things, such as posters or pictures of Ballers and simple sports equipment such as a customized uniform or a ball. The kind of things the star player would be asked to autograph after a hard fought game of B-ball - and, as mentioned, a pen to sign with.

200 cp - Network Expanding Foothold

Since time immemorial, the Solar Ballers have been the stars of the show, and it is only recently that the Dragonbloods have replaced them. But the methods of the Sidereals have not changed at all, and so this simple Manse was prepared for you. At first glance it appears to be nothing more than a simple office building, but once inside you will begin to notice things, most notably the large number of spider-like creatures seemingly made out of basketballs. These Net Weaving Spiders act as your assistants, and will happily prepare you a cup of fantastic coffee for those long nights of paperwork, or even to do some of it themselves - the parts that don't require a personal touch, at least. Additionally, so long as you are inside the Manse, you'll find the bureaucracy inherent to setting up a game, the deals to be made both visible and secretive, will be slightly easier to do for you, and will be slightly harder for any representative of your 'foes' in equal measure, the benefit of having the home court advantage in this game of pens and paperwork.

400 cp - Imperfection Imparting Penalties

The great game known as Basketball is but the least form of the Games of Divinity that mortals can comprehend without suffering such things as having their eyes melt out of their skulls from witnessing such unrefined perfection and awesomeness. As this book predates Basketball itself, it can be considered to be something that defines the game, detailing what is and is not allowed, the limits one should place on themselves… This book's true power, such as it is, is that it can overwrite the rules of Basketball for a period of time. Between the games of divinity and Basketball, there exists room for interpretation. An interpretation that you control. With a modicum of essence, one could erase a rule from this book or write a new one in, and all throughout Creation the rules of B-ball would change with them. How embarrassing it would be, for a Solar Baller to perform a fantastic dunk, only to be called out for having his move be illegal under the current ruleset. Wonderfully unfair, is it not?

600 cp - Prototype Prison

The Jade Prison was the Sidereal Managers greatest project, greatest secret. Made with funds embezelled from their supposed masters, it was where the B-balls within the Ballers very souls would be stored, so as to prevent any more chosen of the Undunked Sun from rising. Some 290 exaltations held in stasis, away from civilization, away from people, and as far away from plot relevance as the Sidereals could manage. This is a prototype of that prison, containing a mere five Solar Baller exaltations, and fake ones at that. Made from a number of 'donated' half castes, the exaltations and prison are both a proof of concept and nothing more - though, I think you'll find that even a fake Solar Baller is greater than almost any mortal. Still, just as the Jade Prison broke and unleashed the Solar Ballers back upon the world, so too is this prison designed to break and unleash its false exaltations upon the world. In Creation, they would likely be mistaken for a particular strong half caste. In other worlds, they would unleash the glory of B-ball upon those who had never witnessed the divine game.

Solar Baller

100 cp - Resplendent Attire

The First Quarter was an era given to excess, where one did things not because they were reasonable or sane, but to prove that you could. Why else would you make your capital city a floating B-ball court? But I digress, for it is not those extremes that we are here to speak of. No, we are here to speak of the clothes upon your back, for they are some of the greatest finery ever created for a Baller. Woven from the magical material, Orichalcum, Moonsilver, and Starmetal with strands of all the colors of jade all throughout them, they are worth more than your average mortal will see in their entire lives. Admittedly, these are not the greatest clothes for what amounts to an outlaw, but by the Undunked Sun if they aren't some of the most comfortable and stylish things you've ever worn.. In an emergency, perhaps you could sell bits of it off or use them as crafting material?

200 cp - The Story of Great C

The last relic of the First Quarter. The man, the myth, the legend - and perhaps, the murderer. Regardless, you now possess what amounts to an autobiography about what it was like to play B-ball in the Primordial War, to live through a time when all sides agreed not to mess with time, and how they lived like Gods in the First Quarter. While we all know how the story ends, it doesn't change the fact that the life and times of Great C make for some of the most epic tales you will ever read about, and that they are suitably motivating. Merely reading them is enough to ignite a passion for B-ball in all but it's most ardent of haters, and for those who already love the sport it can move you to tears - and to train ten times harder so as to not shame the stories you have read with your own inferior skills.

400 cp - Miniature Dunkstar

At the levels that a Solar Baller plays at, an ordinary ball is utterly unsuitable for use - let alone the Primordials or the Incarnae. A single dunk and the ball is likely to explode from the sheer awesome being channeled through it. For that purpose, a number of better, cooler, more stylish balls have been created, such as the Five Jade Basketball of the Dragonblood or the Undunked Suns very own Dunkstar. This, sadly, is not nearly that cool, being merely a replica. Still, having been made from Orichalcum and Moonsilver, the ball may change its properties with a touch of essence from its owner. Rock solid one moment, and soft as a feather the next. Bouncier than ten balls combined, and then so un-bouncy it might as well be flat, and all the while it could in fact survive being dunked by an Incarnae. It also has the ability to morph into a sword or an essence cannon, and to set itself on fire, because it was created by Solars and why not?

600 cp - The White Arena

Far in the Northern Reaches of Creation lies a city built around a B-ball Court, known to all who live there as the White Arena. It is a miracle of Solar engineering, and will actively change itself to suit the needs of the Ballers who reside within its penthouse apartmanse. The Shogunate All-Stars spent many years attempting to break into the place in order to get another shot at Great C, but the defenses refused to allow them entrance without tickets or an appointment. It is here that he trained for centuries for his redemption and revenge both. The city that surrounds the arena prefers to pretend that this place does not exist, as the Shogunate has declared it a very illegal structure for refusing to submit to a "routine search for miscreants", but in truth they mostly just ignore it - it's not like they can enter without permission, and so far as they know, it is empty. Still, the city and arena are now both yours, make of that what you will. You could hole up here for a small eternity, never running out of supplies, so long as you had the motivation to train for that long… or a bunch of asinine Fair Folk ballers didn't give you a proper challenge that you had to respond to lest you shame your mother.

Companions

100 cp / 300 cp - The Team
While a skilled enough Baller can play alone and even hope to win, nay, to utterly serve, that does not mean that you have to. In light of this, I offer you a circle, a team. For 100 cp you may import two companions of yours into the world of Creation to join you on the court, or to convince a pair of the locals to join your team. In either case, these poeple gain an origin and all that comes with it, and 600 cp with which to purchase perks and items.

If you have taken the drawback “Wheel of Fate Rotation”, they instead receive 800 cp to account for how your decision to do so has robbed them of a great deal of potential power.

100 cp - Lunar Rabbit
Something of a rarity in this time, you’ve somehow made the acquaintance of a rabbit themed Lunar Baller. Much like the Sidereals, she’s no slouch on the court - especially when it involves jumping, since she is a rabbit after all - but her real skillset revolves around supporting people during non-game hours. From being a remarkable chef to knowing how to give a great massage, she’s effectively built around building you up and letting you relax until it’s time to slam. Somewhat unusual for Lunars, she also knows a small handful of Fair Folk techniques that allow her to do some very strange things with her body, such as stretch her limbs out to absurd lengths or suddenly turn as flat as paper. Normally her personality would lead her to be somewhat aloof, a woman who specialized in subservience wishing to be treated as an equal, but if you should happen to be a Solar Baller, you can optionally choose to take her as your Lunar Mate, in which case she’ll be… mildly obsessed with you, but no less competent for her fixation.

100 cp - Shogunate No-Star
Though the Dragonblood Ballers are now the preeminent B-ball players in all the lands, they were never meant to shine in the same way that the Solar and Lunar Ballers were. They cannot reach the same heights - part of the reason the Shogunate All Stars is five teams rather than one. This young woman is a Dragonblooded Baller of acceptable, but ultimately insufficient skill at B-ball. She’s an amazing leader, but her skill at the game itself is lacking. What she has in spades is ambition, burning as brightly as her red hair. In another world this girl would be known as empress, but for now she is merely a rank and file Dragonblooded. She does hold a small secret however - she has been studying the Referee of Creation and the Spectral Referee for some time now, and believes that she can both gain access to the Imperial Manse and the favor of it’s resident - and, should she fail to gain it’s favor, at least partially override the First Quarter technology held within. Of course, all of that would be so much easier if she had your help.

Drawbacks

+100 cp - Manyfold Master of Balls
B-ball may be the game of choice for this world, but that is not to say that other games do not exist. One of the greatest insults ever given to the Shogunate All Stars was that they ought to abandon their B-balling careers and play something more suited to them, like soccer. To you this is no insult, for you are also a master of soccer just as much as you are of B-ball. Which, depending on your choices, might be not at all. Either way, you possess a strange obsession with these lesser games and find yourself unable to turn down challenges to them as well as wasting the hours away practicing your game. Hours you could have spent doing something actually useful with your time, like painting your toenails or being a serial killer. As a side effect, this will also cause people to look down upon you for voluntarily playing these other games at all, let alone seeking to master them.

+100 cp - Violence Forsaking Technique
The war in heaven was fought with balls, but that is not to say that good old fashioned violence does not exist in this world. Common bandits, assassins, and other lowlifes will resort to the sword just as often as they would have otherwise, though if provoked into a game they will honor it. You on the other hand, start and end on the court with a ball in hand, for you are utterly incapable of raising your hand in violence against your fellow man, or any other civilized and B-ball playing individual. Against a wild animal, one incapable of playing a decent game then perhaps you would consent to see violence inflicted upon it, but doing so yourself? These hands were meant to serve fools at B-ball, not become stained in blood. Honestly, you might as well be a pacifist for all the fighting you'll not be doing.

+200 cp - Terror Invoking Dunk
All is not well in the lands of Creation. Though B-ball may be the divine game, the coming actions of Great C will prove something beyond a shadow of a doubt - this is not a game meant to be played by mortals. As the jump begins the Shogunate will slowly begin to phase B-ball out of popularity, reducing it from the national pastime to a heinous and foul crime, and will replace it with a game easier for mortal minds to comprehend, soccer. You yourself, almost certainly being a Baller, are likely to be looked down upon poorly by all you meet, an issue that is complicated by your desire to play the game. You could in theory bury this desire and live a relatively ordinary life, but the sheer amount of spite and vitriol this will cause you to feel for soccer will likely get you in trouble sooner or later. Far more likely, you will find and join an underground court of some ilk, the ones that the Shogunate hunts down relentlessly.

+200 cp - Overwhelming Accomplishment Drive
Known to precious few in Creation, the slowly creeping insanity that climbed its way into the minds of the Solar Ballers and drove them to such utter excess was not a natural occurrence, but a curse. One that slowly brought them to ruin, making not them lesser, but the world for their absence. The details are unknown in this era, but for now all you need to know is that no matter what kind of Baller you are, your worst personality traits are slowly amplified as time passes. A lash of deliberate cruelty there, a dot of murder there, and all of it making perfect sense to you at the time. The willingness to use a technique that will kill hundreds upon hundreds, so long as it means you WIN.

If you should be a member of the Balorian World Tour, of the Fair Folk, then you are no Baller at all… but you are not exempt from this. The reasoning may be different, but you are prone to the same outbursts of edginess as the Ballers.

+300 cp - Ball Trampled Underfoot
When the Incarnae and the Ballers first did battle against the Primordials, some of their number did not make it. In the cold depths of the Underworld, those lost souls turned away from B-ball and began to work a number of sorceries, the most dark and foul ones imaginable. They created a wretched perversion of the great game, one they took to calling… Football. There are no dunks in this game, no slamming and certainly no jamming. Instead, the ball is actually carried about and occasionally kicked around by one's foot, and into a sideways basket with no net. The agents of oblivion seek to spread this game amongst the living, to place a balm upon their soul and their most horrible loss at B-ball by making B-ball irrelevant and unimportant. Their agents are everywhere, detracting from the true game and peddling their horrid produce like some kind of drug. If they are not stopped, Creation will become as cold and lifeless as the Underworld, its people tricked into the depths by the promises of grand arenas, exciting games, and endless concessions. If this comes to pass, if such a fundamental aspect of life is rendered irrelevant in such a way, then all of Creation might just fall into oblivion.

+300 cp - Ball Stuck In Sand
The Primordials. The creators of Creation, of the Incarnae, and of B-ball itself. The oldest, and sorest losers in all the lands. Having been forced to rename their team as the Yozi, they seek revenge against all who once opposed them - and, to be honest, everyone who isn't actively helping them reclaim their former glory. Led by Malfeas, the Dunk City, She Who Slams In Her Name, and the Ebon Dragon, the Shadow of all Dunks, they have concocted a poison of the heart to infect Creation with, so that when their moment of triumph is at hand, no one will have the skill at B-ball to save the Incarnae from them. They call this poison… Golf. It is slow. It is boring. It is supposedly a test of skill, taking that one moment that will decide the game and condensing it down into a single swing of the club. But you should know better than to fall for such lies. You must eradicate such games wherever you see them, showing those poor fools the glory of B-ball as compared to the creeping poison that is Golf. For if you do not, then the Yozi will break free, and there will be no mortals to exalt as Ballers. The Primordials and the Incarnae will do battle once again, and if they stand alone… then they will lose.

+400 cp - Metal Replaces Ball
Something horrible is about to happen, jumper. All across Creation, portals made out of an unknown material are opening up, and from them march an army of metal soldiers like a plague of locust - the Alchemical Ballers of Autochthon. He has seen what ballers Creation can muster, and he considers it ripe for the picking. The greatest talents will begin to go missing, as team after team of Alchemical Ballers set up shop to replace Creation's own teams with theirs. They see B-ball not for the greatness that it is but as nothing but a watered down mockery of the Games of Divinity, the games that Autochthon himself created, and so seek to wipe it out by wiping the floor with creation until not a single Baller has the heart to play. If they are not stopped, there will be no Ballers left in Creation, and nobody to play B-ball against who is not made of metal. Should that day arrive, then B-ball will no longer exist in the hearts of men, for no man will play it. You must save B-ball from the Alchemical Ballers. You must defeat them in the courts and in the streets and anywhere and everywhere a game could be played. If you do not, then they will eventually see no reason to let you live for they have learned all they can from you, and you will become nothing but resources to make more of their own heartless kind from. But, perhaps you have what it takes to go on the offensive? To not only play and win against every team they try to set up, but to set into their own home court and utterly serve them? It would be the only way to stop this plague upon Creation, and even if you can defend your own court, you must also think of all those who cannot and what might happen to them if they lose too often...

+400 cp - Wheel of Fate Rotation

The Incarne and the Ballers usurped the Primordials. The Dragonblood and Sidereal Ballers usurped the Solar and Lunar Ballers. The Yozi and the Infernal Ballers seek to Usurp the Dragonblood and Sidereal Ballers, returning the world to its natural state. But that is not what destiny has laid out for them or for you. No matter your origin you are no longer a Baller - instead, you are a mere mortal. And yet, you must rise above these faceless masses as surely as the sun rises in the east. But the sun will not favor you. The moon will not embrace you. The stars do not watch over you. The blood of dragons will not flow through you. You are mortal and mortal you shall stay. And yet. Solar, Lunar, Sidereal, Dragonblood, the Incarnae, the Primordials. You must cast all of them down from their thrones in heaven and earth and erect a dynasty of mortals, by mortals, for mortals. The time of gods has passed, and it is time they knew this. I expect you will need to take this debate to court, and show the Ballers what it means to still be human, but there are other, more subtle ways such a thing could be arranged. It matters not if you deliver the final dunk, train the one who does so, or arrange an accident to delay a critical member of the defense, not so long as you and yours are victorious. Your companions, should you import any, are also reduced to mortals as well.

The End

Stay Here
Move On
Go Home

Notes

Q - What the fuck?
A - Think Exalted plus Space Jam

Q - Who wrote this fucking thing?
A - Cthulhu Fartagn/BLADE. Normally I put that at the top but I'm cribbing the style from the other Shards.

Q - What, what? X does NOT work that way
A - Feel free to correct me, I don't actually know that much about Exalted.

Q - Is it just me or are these perks kinda useless post-jump?
A - Sorta yes sorta no? You can fanwank a tad bit to make them useful outside of basketball.

Q - Companion option is a bit weird, can I not import companions as Lunars?
A - Objectively speaking you can, I just don't have any perks for them.