TALON

RULES OF PLAY

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1. BACKGROUND

Long hampered by cost and beset by international problems, real space exploration did not seem possible for humanity. Amazing technological breakthroughs would change all of that in the year 2112. The invention of the Near Faster Than Light (NFTL) drive would make it possible for large ships to move easily in and out of a planet's gravity well, and to travel quickly within the confines of a solar system. Ten years later, the perfecting of Faster Than Light (FTL) drive would turn the galaxy into an open canvas. United by a common purpose, the newly formed Terran Confederation began to paint their picture.

Expansion led to colonies, research stations, and even more technological discoveries, but it also led to the realization that they were not alone. Although no sentient alien species had been encountered, long range scanners had picked up the distinctive signatures of FTL drives. Sentient races must exist… and they must be space faring. Terran expansion stopped.

Not knowing what to expect, a period of consolidation followed which emphasized defensive technologies and fleet building. First contact was made by the people of Earth with this unknown race in 2227. Over time, they would eventually call these other-worlders the Talon. It was a shortening of the alien sounds that made up their name but it was also oddly prophetic—the Talon Empire swooped in very much like a raptor upon the fledgling Terran Confederation.

Abbreviations and acronyms—The following abbreviations and acronyms are used in these rules:

AP = Available Power
FTL = Faster Than Light
NFTL = Near Faster Than Light
BB, CA, FTR, etc. = see Hull Designations (5.2)

2. COMPONENTS

2.1 Component List

A complete game of *Talon* includes the following:

- 1 and a half mounted mapboards
- 3 sheets of ship and planet counters
- 1 half-sheet of information markers
- 1 Impulse/Round Display
- 1 Empire War Map Display
- 2 identical Player Aid Cards
- 1 pad of Fleet Logsheets
- 2 dry erase markers
- This rule booklet
- 1 Play Book
- Two 6-sided dice

2.2 Board

The game includes a single mounted board and a smaller extension board that is used to expand the board as necessary.

2.3 Ship Counters

The ships in the game are represented by large hexagonal counters. The ships with a blue background belong to the Terran Confederation; the ships with a red background belong to the Talon Empire.

2.4 The Impulse Track

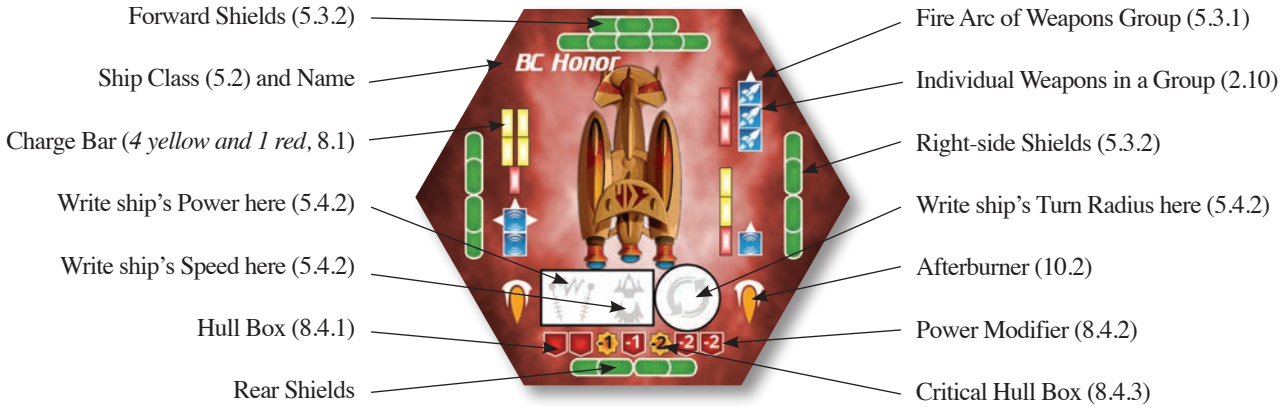
Keep track of the current round and Impulse with the Impulse Track. This display is explained in full in section 4.

2.5 The Empire War Map Display

Used in Empire War mode, see Play Book (section 15).

2.6 The Player Aid Cards

Two identical player aid cards are provided that contain important ship information and firing tables.



The Talon BC has 3 Weapon Groups. It has a Missile weapon group with 3 Missile launchers and 2 Red boxes in the charge bar, a single Disruptor Weapon group that only has a forward firing arc, and a double Disruptor Weapon Group that may fire forward, left or right, as indicated by the white arrows around the Weapon icons. The Disruptor Weapon Group on the left has 1 Red box and 4 Yellow boxes in its Charge Bar. The Disruptor Weapon Group on the right has 1 Red box and 2 Yellow boxes in its Charge Bar. This Talon ship has 2 Afterburners and 2 Critical Hull Boxes.

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2.7 Fleet Log Sheets

A pad of log sheets are included, however, these are not required to play the game. This game is best played writing information directly on the ship counters.

2.8 Dry Erase

A dry erase marker is included in the game box to mark things on the large, laminated ship counters. Do not use a non-dry erase marker on the counters. For erasing use a cotton swab.

2.9 Informational Markers

Turn Radius (7.2.2)

Side Slip (7.3.2)

Shield Reinf. (6.2)

Missile (13.0)

Damaged Missile (13.6)

Round (3.1)

Talon Initiative (4.1)

Terran Initiative (4.1)

Change Initiative (4.2)

Defend Initiative (4.2)

Critical Damage markers: These occur in a Critical Hit (8.5).

Shields Down

Helm Down

Power –1

Turn +1

Power Loss

Scenario Markers: Used in special scenarios only:

Talon Front Line

Terran Front Line

Objective Marker

Jury Rig Up

Jury Rig Down

2.10 Weapon Types

Fusion Cannon

Wave Motion Gun

Missiles

Anti-Matter Torpedo

Phaser

Disruptor

3. SEQUENCE OF PLAY

3.1 Rounds, Impulses, and Turns

Talon is played in a series of Rounds. A Round is composed of six Impulses (A through F) plus the Power Phase. An Impulse is composed of two Turns—the Initiative Player's Turn and the Second Player's Turn. All this is tracked on the Impulse Display (4.0) with the Initiative and Round markers (4.1).

3.2 Sequence of Play Outline

Impulse A

Initiative Player Turn

- Remove any of his Shield Reinforcement markers that expire this Impulse.
- Use any/all AP for each of his ships that receive AP this Impulse, in any order.
- Move all of his ships that must move this Impulse, in any order.
- May fire any/all ships that have a fully charged Weapon Group.
- May attempt to Repair any ships with Critical Damage (See Damage and Criticals).

Second Player Turn

The Second Player Turn is identical to the Initiative Player Turn except replace the term Initiative Player with Second Player.

At the end of each Impuse check to see if the Initiative has changed.

Impulse B-F

Impulses B through F are conducted in the same manner as Impulse A except different ships may have AP or movement.

Power Phase

Initiative Player's Power Phase

- Charge one Red Box per Weapon Group or Passively Charge Yellow Boxes (see Power Phase [6.0]) on all ships.
- Every Ship's Power Curve may be adjusted up or down by 1 step.

Second Player's Power Phase

Identical to the Initiative Player's Power Phase except now the Second Player can charge boxes and adjust Power Curves on his ships.

Reinforcement Phase

Some scenarios allow reinforcements to arrive in mid-battle.

- Initiative Player—Deploy reinforcements as per scenario description
- Second Player—Deploy reinforcements as per scenario description

Retreat Phase

It may be necessary or wise to retreat ships during battle.

- Initiative Player—Eligible ships may jump to FTL
- Second Player—Eligible ships may jump to FTL

Start a new Round with Impulse A and advance the Round marker.

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4. THE IMPULSE DISPLAY AND INITIATIVE

4.1 THE IMPULSE DISPLAY

The Impulse Display tracks the current Impulse and informs players when AP is available or when ships must move.

The Initiative marker is placed in the appropriate box for the current Impulse and Turn. Indicate which side has the Initiative with this marker. When moving this marker from the Initiative Player box to the Second Player box within an Impulse do *not* flip the marker. The side with the Initiative stays face up until Initiative is changed.

Nothing in the game happens simultaneously. During each Impulse, the player with the Initiative takes his Turn first, followed by the player without the Initiative.

Important! Each Impulse box on the chart may have one or more numbers. When a number on the Impulse box matches the ship's Power (the first number in a ship's Power Curve [5.4.1]), **that ship receives AP**. When a number on the Impulse box matches the ship's Speed (the *second* number in the Power Curve), **that ship *must* move during that Impulse.**

EXAMPLE: The Patton has a Power Curve of 2-4-1. On Impulse C and F a "2" appears, matching Patton's Power value. On those Impulses the Patton receives AP. On Impulse A, C, D and F a "4" appears, the "4" matches the Patton's Speed value. On those Impulses the Patton must move.

In most battles, there may be Impulses where the ships will have no AP available and will be unable to move. Ships **may still fire, use Batteries or use Afterburners** in those Impulses, but most of the time they can be quickly skipped.

After Impulse F, the Power Phase occurs for the Initiative and then the Second Player, after which the Round ends and the Round marker is advanced to the next box. In some scenarios, events will occur on a specific Round.

4.2 Initiative Control

During an Impulse, a player may spend AP on Initiative Control in an attempt to either Change Initiative or Defend Initiative (keep it the same). Both the player with the Initiative and the Second Player may attempt to Change it or Defend it.

Procedure:

- Each ship that spends AP on the Initiative should be marked with either a Change Initiative or Defend Initiative marker.
- At the end of an Impulse, if there are more Change Initiative markers on ships than Defend Initiative markers, the player who placed the Change Initiative markers may change the Initiative Player by flipping the Initiative marker. The new Initiative Player will take his actions first in the upcoming Impulse and beyond, until the Initiative changes again.
- Players may force their opponent to have the Initiative.
- If the number of Defend Initiative markers on ships is greater than or equal to the number of Change Initiative markers, the Initiative remains the same.
- Remove all Change/Defend Initiative markers before beginning the next Impulse.

DESIGN NOTE: The ships in this game are traveling at tremendous speeds and are actually very small compared to the distances covered. Because of this, all of the ships on a side have interlinked sensors, targeting computers, electronic counter measures, etc. Spending AP to change or defend the Initiative represents a side investing ship resources into these systems to gain a tactical advantage.

EXAMPLE: It is Impulse C and the Talon player has the Initiative. During his Impulse he had his BB spend 1 AP to Defend the Initiative. However, both the Terran BC and SC get AP in their Turn so they are both able to place Change Initiative markers on their ships. At the end of this Impulse, there are more Change Initiative markers than Defend Initiative markers so the Terran is allowed to select the new Initiative Player. The Terran player chooses himself, flips the Initiative marker over and will take his Turn first in Impulse D.

5. SHIPS

5.1 Ship Properties

Power Curve: Each ship has a Power Curve, listed on the Player Aid Card, which shows, in order, the Power, Speed, and the Turn Radius at all possible Speeds. As a ship increases Speed, the ship's Turn Radius will increase and the Power will decrease. This information is written in the white box and circle on the ship counter.

Power: This is the energy that a ship generates that is not being used for movement, life support, shields, etc. This number is the amount of Available Power (AP) that may be spent by this ship in the course of a Round. **Each ship may only spend, at most, one AP per Impulse.** Since most ships will have less than 6 Power and there are 6 Impulses in a Round, ships will not be able to spend an AP in every Impulse. All AP spending options are detailed in the Spending Available Power section.

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Speed: The number of hexes that a ship can move in the course of a Round. **Each ship may only move, at most, ONE hex per Impulse.** Since ships, in general, have a Speed less than 6 and there are 6 Impulses in a Round, ships will not be able to move in every Impulse.

Turn Radius: A measure of the maneuverability of the ship. This value dictates the number hexes a ship must move straight, after turning, before it can turn again.

Power Phase: This is a special phase that occurs after Impulse F. Weapons are charged during this time and each ship's Power Curve may be adjusted.

Weapon Group: All of a ship's Weapons are combined into one to three Weapon Groups. All of the Weapons in a Weapon Group share the same Charge Bar and Firing Arc(s). All Weapons in a group must be fired when that group fires. Individual Weapons within a Weapon Group may select different targets, as long as the targets are within that Group's Firing Arc.

Weapon: Within a Weapon Group, there are one or more icons which correspond to an individual Weapon.

Firing Arc: Each Weapon Group has one or more arrows designating the direction(s) that Weapon Group may fire.

Charge Bar: This is the bar made of red and yellow boxes next to a Weapon Group. Charged state is indicated by marking off boxes. Red boxes are charged during the Power Phase. Yellow boxes may be Actively Charged with AP (see Spending Available Power) or Passively Charged during the Power Phase (see Power Phase).

Shield Arc: A groups of shields on a ship protecting it from damage in a particular direction. Each shield box represents 1 point of damage that Shield Arc can sustain. Damage to shields is indicated by marking off boxes.

Hull Box: Each box represents 1 point of damage a ship can sustain. A ship is destroyed when all Hull Boxes are marked off. Damage to hull is indicated by marking off boxes.

Critical Hull Box: Some Hull Boxes cause Critical Damage to a ship when marked off. The Critical Damage Table determines the outcome.

Battery/Afterburner: Many Terran ships have Batteries and many Talon ships have Afterburners. Batteries are marked off when charged; Afterburners are marked off when spent. See those sections of the rules for more details.

5.2 Hull designations

This game uses standard naval hull designations to identify a given ship class as listed below.

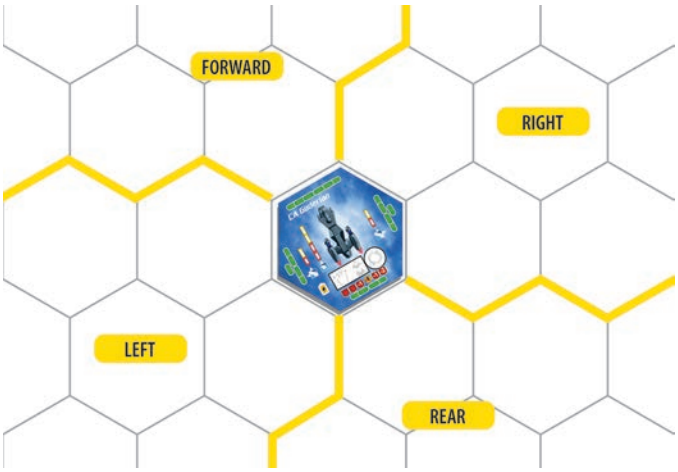
Hull	*Abbreviation*
Scout	SC
Destroyer	DD
Frigate	FF
Light Cruiser	CL
Heavy Cruiser	CA
Battle Cruiser	BC
Battleship	BB
Dreadnought	DN
Fighter	FTR
Carrier	CV
Transport	Tran

5.3 Firing Arc and Shield Arc

(5.3.1) Firing Arcs: Weapons may only fire at targets within their Firing Arc. There are four Firing Arcs in the game—forward, left, right, and rear. These are indicated by the arrows next to the Weapon. See the image below or the image on the Player Aid Card to determine which hex around a ship is in which Firing Arc.

EXAMPLE: If a Weapon has an arrow pointing to the left and an arrow pointing to the front, it may fire at any targets within the left and/or front Firing Arcs.

(5.3.2) Shield Arcs: Shield boxes absorb damage from fire within the Shield Arc. There are four Shield Arcs in the game—forward, left, right, and rear. These are represented by the shields on the ship counter. The Firing Arcs and Shield Arcs are the same. There is no need to draw lines of sight to determine which Shield Arc is hit while firing (8.0).



EXAMPLE: If an enemy ship was in the Forward Arc of a Heavy Cruiser, only Weapons that could fire to the front would be able to target the enemy. Likewise, any fire from that enemy ship would be applied to the front shield of the Heavy Cruiser.

5.4 Power Curve

(5.4.1) Each ship has a Power Curve, listed on the Player Aid Card, which shows the Power (1st number), Speed (2nd number), and the Turn Radius (3rd number) at all possible Speeds. The starting Power Curve for each ship is highlighted on the Player Aid Card.

EXAMPLE: The starting Power Curve for a Terran Heavy Cruiser (CA) is 3-3-2.

(5.4.2) Indicating the Power Curve: When the Speed for the ship is chosen, the corresponding three numbers of the Power Curve are written in the rectangular white box and circle on the front of the ship counter.

(5.4.3) Changing Speed: During the Power Phase, each ship's Power Curve may be adjusted up or down. Normally, a ship can only change her Speed by one. Most Power Curves do not go below a Speed of 1 because normal combat ships must always have a Speed of at least 1.

DESIGN NOTE: In general, as a ship increases Speed, the ship's Turn Radius will increase and the Power will decrease.

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EXAMPLE: A Terran CA with a Speed of 3 at the start of the Power Phase may choose to Speed up to Speed 4 or slow down to Speed 2 as shown by the numbers in the white circle. If the Terran CA Speeds up, her Power Curve becomes 2-4-2. Erase the previous Power Curve, and write 2-4-2 in its place. The cruiser now moves at Speed 4 but she has less AP to spend.

(5.4.4) Effects of Hull Damage: When a ship has damage, the modifier in the Hull Boxes (8.4.2) may reduce the amount of Power. This is applied to the Power during the Power Phase. A ship cannot choose a Speed that would cause it to have negative Power.

(5.4.5) Power Less Than Zero: At the end of the Power Phase, if a ship has a modified Power less than 0 because of the Power modifiers caused by damage and critical effects, then the ship breaks apart and explodes.

EXAMPLE: The Guderian is in trouble. She's lost her front shields and she only has 1 more Hull Box remaining. Currently her Power Curve reads "1-5-3" but, due to damage she just sustained, she now has a -2 showing in the left-most Hull Box. This means she must slow down to Speed 4 during the Power Phase, giving her a Power Curve of 2-4-2. With the –2 modifier this becomes 0-4-2. If she were unable to slow down, she would have a negative number for Power. This would cause the FTL core to overheat and explode.

NFTL drives must be kept "hot". The rest of a ship's energy is generated by the power system produced by the drive. Attempts to bring the ship to a standstill "stall" out the drive and deprive the ship of all power.

6. POWER

6.1 Spending Available Power (AP)

One point of Power becomes available to a ship at various Impulses throughout a Round based on its Power Curve and the Impulse chart. The Impulses in which a ship has AP may or may not be Impulses in which the ship moves. Remember that AP is spent *before* movement. AP spent during the Impulse may impact movement in that same Impulse.

When a point of Power becomes available to a ship, it can be spent on one of the following actions:

- **Enable a Side Slip** – If this option is chosen a Side Slip marker is placed on the ship. The next time the ship moves, it may choose to Side Slip (see Movement and Turning). The next time the ship moves (even if it is this same Impulse), remove the marker whether the ship Side Slipped or not.
- **Power Through a Turn** – Move the Turn Radius marker 1 hex closer. If the Turn Radius marker is only one hex away, it is removed and the ship can turn the next time it moves (see 7.0). If you are placing Turn Radius markers directly on the turning ship, flip or replace the marker to indicate how many more hexes are left in the turn.
- **Charge a Yellow box on a Weapon Group Charge Bar** – On one of the Charge Bars on the ship, one yellow box may be marked off. This is called **Active Charging.** A Yellow box may be charged even if there are un-charged Red boxes.
- **Charge a Battery** – If the ship has a battery (not all races have batteries), it may be marked off (10.1) if not charged. **Batteries do not normally start the game charged.**
- **Reinforce a Shield Arc** – One Shield Reinforcement marker may be placed on a specific Shield Arc of that ship (6.2). The letter on the Shield Reinforce marker should match the letter of the **current** Impulse.
- **Change the Initiative** – Place a Change Initiative marker on the ship (4.2).
- **Defend the Initiative** – Place a Defend Initiative marker on the ship (4.2).
- **Transmit Power to Fighters** – Carriers and Bases may transmit AP to friendly Fighter Squadrons (Advanced Rule 12.2.2).
- **Select New Missile Target** – Ships with missile launchers may select new targets for friendly missiles with AP (Advanced Rule 13.7).

6.2 Reinforce a Shield Arc

(6.2.1) Purpose: Each Shield Reinforce marker acts as one extra shield box and absorbs one damage to that Shield Arc before being removed.

(6.2.2) Placement Restrictions:

- Each Shield Arc can have, at most, *one* reinforcement.
- Shield Arcs that are down, either because of Critical Damage or because they have been completely destroyed (no boxes left in that Shield Arc), may *not* be reinforced.
- A Shield Reinforcement cannot be placed if the total number of reinforcements currently on a ship is greater than or equal to **half of the ship's Power, rounded down** to a minimum of 1 reinforcement.

*EXAMPLE: A Terran CA's Power Curve is 3-3-2 (Power, the first number, is 3). If it already has one Shield Reinforcement, it cannot place another on the ship. If the ship had a Power Curve of 4-2-1 instead (4 Power), it would be able to place a second Shield Reinforcement. If the ship, instead, had a Power Curve of 1-5-3 and **no** active Shield Reinforcements, it would still be able to place one Shield Reinforcement.*

(6.2.3) Removal: Shield Reinforce markers expire one Round after they are placed. Remove the marker the next time the lettered Impulse that matches Shield Reinforcement marker occurs for the owning player. Shield Reinforcement markers already in play may be removed at will, before they expire, by the ship's owner. This allows the ship to reinforce a different Shield Arc or reset a Shield Reinforcement.

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7. MOVEMENT AND TURNING

The invention of the Near Faster Than Light (NFTL) drive was the first revolution in space travel. Before that, mankind was dependent upon conventional rockets. The cost to get even one pound of weight out of Earth's atmosphere and into space was exorbitant. Travel between planets within Earth's solar system was painfully slow. The NFTL drive changed all of that and effectively eliminated conventional rockets. The drive creates a pocket of subspace in front of a ship which draws a ship forward. While a ship using an NFTL drive never leaves normal space, the change in subspace around (and especially in front of) a ship allows it to easily overcome gravity, accelerate in space, and travel at Speeds much more quickly than conventional rocketry would allow. It also does it at a fraction of the cost and without the need for ridiculous amounts of fuel. All ships in this game are using NFTL drives when moving around the board.

The unique properties of NFTL drives have a number of interesting impacts in this game. First, the distortions and subspace pockets are such that it is difficult for ships with NFTL drives to be close to each other. Second, it is very dangerous for NFTL drives to change their output dramatically – whether in Speed or direction. The parameters of the subspace field must be adjusted incrementally or the ship will break apart.

7.1 Moving

When a ship can move according the Impulse chart, it MUST move. If a player has multiple ships that can all move in the same Impulse, he may move them in any order. A ship that can move can do one of the following:

- **Go straight.** Move the ship one hex forward, along her current facing. If a ship has a Turn Radius marker on the board, it is removed if the ship moves into the same hex as that counter.
- **Turn** (7.2)
- **Side Slip** (7.3)

7.2 Turning

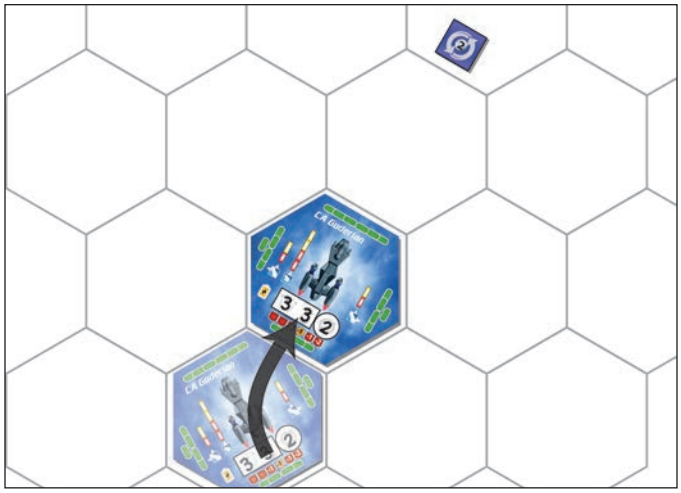
(7.2.1) Procedure: Turn the ship one hexside either left or right and move one space forward, in that order.

(7.2.2) Turn Radius: A ship may only turn if it does not have a Turn Radius marker on the board. After completing the turn and subsequent move either:

1) place a Turn Radius marker a number of hexes away from the ship equal to her current Turn Radius. This counter indicates when the ship can turn again. The Turn Radius markers are much smaller than the hexes and it is helpful to place the counter along the hex side closest to the ship that it belongs to; *OR*
2) place the Turn Radius marker directly on the ship. In this case, the number on the counter corresponds to the remaining hexes a ship must move before it may turn again. The counter is flipped or replaced with a smaller value Turn Radius marker as the ship moves through her turn.

DESIGNER NOTE: During large battles, it may be more convenient to place the counter directly on the ship performing the turn to prevent board clutter.

A ship with a Turn Radius of 0 would not need to use a Turn Radius marker and could turn every time it moves.

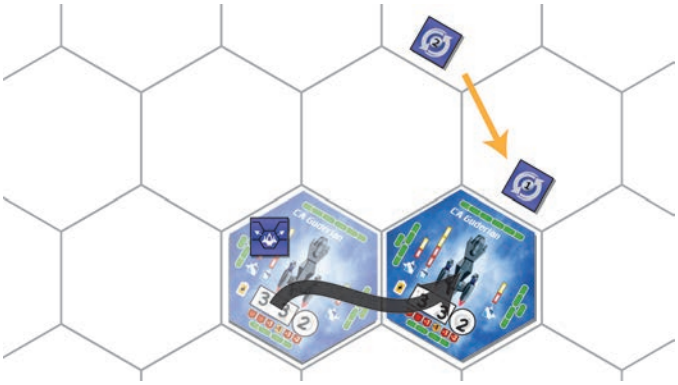


EXAMPLE: A Terran CA with a Speed of 3 has a Turn Radius of 2. After the ship completes its turn, a turn radius marker is placed 2 hexes away.

7.3 Side Slip

(7.3.1) Procedure: The ship shifts one space 60 degrees forward (left or right) without changing facing. This is independent of the Turn Radius and can be done even if the ship has a Turn Radius marker on the board.

(7.3.2) Side Slip Markers: A Side Slip can only be done if that ship previously spent AP to place a Side Slip marker on the ship. Whether the player uses the sideslip or not, the Side Slip counter is removed when the ship moves. When a ship performs a Side Slip, if the ship still has a Turn Radius marker on the board, the marker will need to be moved to be in the same hex row as the ship. When moved, it should be adjusted so that it is one hex closer to the ship, since the ship moved one hex forward.



EXAMPLE: Here the Terran cruiser used AP to place a marker on the ship. During this cruiser's next Move, she MAY chose to shift one hex to the side, keeping the same facing. Since the cruiser had a turn radius marker 2 hexes ahead of her, it also gets shifted in the same direction and it moves 1 hex closer.

7.4 Collisions

Because of the instability of the subspace pockets caused by the NFTL drives, ships of the same race suffer damage if they occupy the same hex together (Exception: Fighters in the same squadron, Bases, and Missiles). Because each race's NFTL drives are tuned slightly differently, this does not apply to ships of different races.

Rule: If a ship moves into the same hex as another ship **of its race** both ships take **3 Damage** on the shield facing the other ship. The ship's owner chooses which ship resolves damage first. Ships of

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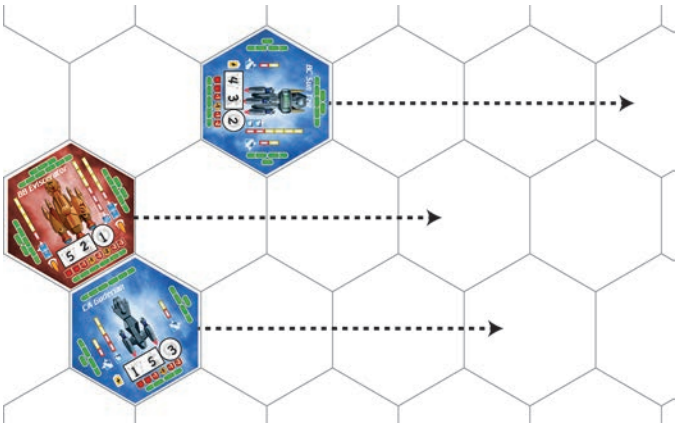
different races may pass through each other freely without damage. Ships of the same race may never begin the scenario stacked in the same hex.

PLAY NOTE: Since ships move one at a time, ships of the same race that start their move in the same hex and end their move in the same hex will damage each other each Impulse they move. Be careful managing large fleets.

7.5 Floating Map

(7.5.1) The Map board is "floating". If a ship is about to move off the map, all of the ships and planets can be shifted over the same amount and centered on the map so that there is room to move. If there is not enough room to shift things over, the Extension map may be used to accommodate movement. Also, if both players agree, the map may be shifted at any time to better accommodate the ships.



Here a Talon ship is approaching the left edge of the board and wishes to turn to its left side. To accommodate the shift in battle, the map "floats"—every counter on the board is moved 3 hexes inward.

(7.5.2) Mandatory Retreat: If both maps are already in play and there is no room to shift things over, a ship that is 6 or more hexes away from the nearest other ship is removed from play to accommodate the shift. She is considered to have retreated.

(7.5.3) Terrain and the Floating Map: Terrain is likewise shifted when the map floats and if a Terrain counter is ever six hexes from another ship it is removed from play to accommodate the shift. Combat has drifted so far that the terrain element is no longer relevant.

8. FIRING

8.1 Charge Bar

(8.1.1) Purpose: Each Weapon Group has a Charge Bar on the ship counter. Some Charge Bars are divided to fit the counter; this is treated as one Charge Bar *(example: the Wave Motion Gun on the Terran BB)*. **The Weapon Group may only be fired if the bar is fully charged.** Once the Weapon fires, the charge bar is completely erased—even if only one Weapon in the Group fires. No Weapon in the Weapon Group (even if it did not fire) may fire again until the Charge Bar is again fully charged.

(8.1.2) Recharging: Yellow boxes on a Charge Bar may be Actively Charged by spending AP or Passively Charged during the Power Phase. Red boxes are only charged during the Power Phase.

(8.1.3) Ships normally begin a scenario with their Charge Bars (9.2) fully charged.

8.2 Target Selection

(8.2.1) In General: Any and all firing by one ship must be completed before another ship may fire. If more than one ship or Missile is in a hex, the firing player must choose the target he is firing at. **Weapons within a group may select different targets.**

(8.2.2) Restrictions:

- Weapons may only fire at targets within their Firing Arc (5.3.1).
- You may not intentionally fire on your own ships.
- No fire may occur between ships or Missiles in the same hex.

(8.2.3) Blocking Fire: Planets may block fire (17.2.2). Ships do not block fire in any way (Ships are actually quite small compared to the size of the hexes).

8.3 Firing Procedure:

Follow this procedure for each firing:

1. Select a fully Charged Weapon Group on the firing ship.
2. Confirm that an eligible target is in range of the Weapons in that Group.
3. Erase the Weapon Group Charge Bar.
4. Select a Weapon (one at a time) within the Weapon Group and the target.
5. Fire is resolved by rolling a die and consulting the appropriate weapon chart on the Player Aid Card. Whether a shot hits and how much damage is dealt depends upon the result at a given range.

   EXAMPLE: The Phaser deals a variable amount of damage based on the range and the number rolled. The Disruptor, on the other hand, always deals 2 damage if it hits.

   You may repeat steps 4 and 5 for the remaining Weapons in that Group, if able.
6. Determine which Shield Arc is hit—the Shield Arc hit is the target ship's Firing Arc in which the firing ship resides. Note that Firing Arcs and Shield Arcs are the same; there is no need to draw lines of sight to determine which Shield Arc is hit (Lines of sight are drawn only for blocking terrain like Planets).

EXAMPLE: The Patton is firing on Vision with her Forward Firing Arc. Fire will affect Vision's left Shield Arc since Patton is in Vision's left Firing Arc (shaded hexes).

8.4 Damage and Criticals

(8.4.1) Damage: One point of Damage destroys one Shield or Hull box. Damage is normally applied to the appropriate Shield facing first. When all of the Shield boxes are destroyed on a given Shield Arc, that shield arc is considered "down" and additional damage taken on that Arc is marked off on the Hull boxes.

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(8.4.2) Power Modifiers: If a modifier is present in the leftmost Hull Box, then that modifier is applied to the Power during the Power Phase.

EXAMPLE: Terran CA Napoleon has 3 Hull Boxes destroyed so that the leftmost box is a "–1". During the Power Phase, the player chooses a Speed of 3 giving it a Power Curve of 3-3-2. Because of the damage, the Terran player actually writes 2-3-1 on his ship.

(8.4.3) Critical Hull Box: The moment a is marked off. The ship's owner must roll two 6-sided dice on the Critical Damage Table.

8.5 Critical Damage Table

The Critical Damage Table is located on the Player Aid card. Roll two dice and apply the result immediately.

- Bases take no critical damage if Maneuvering Thruster Damage (6) or Helm Down (4) are rolled.
- It is possible that, because of other battle damage or the game situation, a roll on the above table will actually have little or no impact. This represents non-critical damage and a re-roll should *not* be performed.

  EXAMPLE: A ship rolled an 11 on the critical damage table and now has a Power Loss marker. The ship takes another critical damage and again rolls an 11. Since it still has the Power Loss marker, nothing happens.

8.6 Ship Destruction

(8.6.1) How: When the last Hull Box is destroyed, the ship is immediately destroyed. Remove the counter from play.

(8.6.2) Explosion Damage:

- Each ship in the same hex with the destroyed ship takes damage **equal to the ship's Explosion Rating plus one.** The Explosion Rating of a ship can be found on the Player Aid Card. Roll one die for each Shield Arc. The highest result is the side that takes damage. In the event of a tie, reroll among the tied Shield Arcs.
- Each ship in all adjacent hexes takes damage on the facing Shield Arc equal to the destroyed ship's Explosion Rating.

(8.6.3) Sequence of Explosions: If multiple ships are exploding at the same time (due to fire from a Weapon like the Fusion Cannon) the order in which the explosions are resolved is determined by the ships' owner. If both sides of the battle have ships that are exploding, the current player resolves his ships first.

(8.6.4.) Fighters and Explosions: Fighters never cause explosion damage. If Fighters are in the proximity of an explosion, the damage is only applied to *one Fighter* in the Squadron.

The tuned nature of a Fighter Squadron's NFTL drives means that a Fighter Squadron operates within a single subspace pocket. The net effect of this subspace field causes exterior explosions to be focused within the field toward the nearest NFTL generator. Like electricity running along the quickest path to ground, explosions impact only one FTR in the squadron. This principle has been studied by multiple empires for possible use in a defensive role, but none have yet been successful in implementing it on a capital ship.

(8.6.5) Missiles and Explosions: Explosion damage is applied to ONLY ONE Missile per hex.

Missiles, like Fighters, may use a shared NFTL bubble when traveling close together in space. As with Fighters above, the force of the explosion is exerted on only one Missile.

8.7 Repair of Critical Damage

Some Critical Damage can be repaired if the Critical Damage marker has the Repairable Damage icon = . Only Critical Damage that has this icon is repairable. To attempt repair, roll a 6-sided die. If the result is a 6, the Critical Damage has been repaired and the counter is removed.

Repairs may be attempted at the end of every Turn (thus every Impulse) following the Impulse in which the ship took Critical Damage. Critical Damage may *not* be repaired during the Impulse in which it is placed on the ship.

9. THE POWER PHASE

9.1 In General

The Power Phase occurs between Rounds—after Impulse F ends but before the next Impulse A begins. The player with the Initiative takes all of his Power Phase actions first. Remember to adjust the Initiative before the Power Phase if the Change Initiative marker is in place from Impulse "F".

9.2 Charge Weapons

(9.2.1) Passively Charge Yellow Boxes: If no Red Box needs to be marked off on a particular Charge Bar, the player may instead mark off a number of Yellow Boxes on that Charge Bar equal to the number of Weapons in that group.

EXAMPLE: A Talon BC has a Weapon Group of 2 Disruptors. The Charge Bar is 1 red and 4 Yellow Boxes. If the Red Box is already marked off, he may instead mark off 2 Yellow Boxes on that bar since there are 2 Weapons in that Weapon Group.

(9.2.2) Charge Red Boxes: Every ship may mark off one Red Box on every Charge Bar it has. This is the only time during the game that a Red Box may be marked off.

9.3 Adjust Power Curve

Every ship may then have her Power Curve adjusted. Remember that most ships may only change their Speed by one.

If a ship has a modifier in the left-most Hull Box, apply the modifier to the ship's Power (see Power Curve).

If a Turn Radius marker is already on the board, it is *not* moved closer or farther away if the ship's Turn Radius changes.

The "Power Loss" Critical Damage does not modify your Power, however it does prevent adjusting your Power Curve and Charging weapons.

9.4 End Turn Activities

After all ships have completed the Power Phase, it is usually a good idea to quickly scan the ships and see what numbers appear for movement and AP.

Advance the Round marker one space to the right. If it is Round 10, advance the back to 1. It is now Round 11.

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10. BATTERIES AND AFTERBURNERS

10.1 Batteries

Some races, including the Terrans, have figured out a dynamic way to temporarily store massive amounts of energy.

(10.1.1) Purpose: A Battery lets a ship save AP for later use. A Battery gives a ship one AP in the Impulse it is used. A ship with a Battery will have a battery icon on the counter. No ship has more than one battery. When used, erase the Battery.

(10.1.2) When: Batteries can *only* be used to provide an AP in an Impulse that the ship does *not* normally receive an AP per the Impulse Chart. This means that a ship will never have more than one AP to spend in any Impulse.

(10.1.3) Recharging a Battery: The same Battery can be charged and used any number of times throughout the game. Batteries are charged by spending an AP and marking off the battery icon.

(10.1.4) At Start Status: Batteries do *not* usually start charged at the beginning of a scenario.

10.2 Afterburners

Afterburners represent the Talon's ability to force their NFTL engines to operate at higher output than normal. This causes them to burn out with extended use.

(10.2.1) Who: A ship equipped with an Afterburner will have one or more Afterburner icons somewhere on the counter.

(10.2.2) Purpose: On any Impulse in which a ship is *not* scheduled to move, Afterburners may be used to allow the ship to move one hex. Normal movement rules and Turn Radius restriction apply. A ship may use an Afterburner to Side Slip, if previously marked with a Side Slip counter. When used, mark off one Afterburner box. Each Afterburner can only be used once in a scenario and cannot be recharged.

(18.2.3) Restrictions: Each ship can only use one Afterburner in an Impulse, so a ship may not move more than one hex per Impulse.

STOP

The above rules are all that are needed to play the Tutorial and Scenario 1.

ADVANCED RULES

11. RETREATING FROM BATTLE

The Faster Than Light (FTL) drive was the second revolution in space travel. Using very similar principles to the NFTL, it allows ships to move many times faster than the Speed of light. Instead of creating subspace field distortions and pockets around the ship (like the NFTL), a FTL drive actually moves the ship into subspace. NFTL and FTL drives are so similar that they are essentially the same engine. A ship that wants to retreat from battle must stop using the engine as a NFTL and use it as a FTL. When battle begins NFTL drives are engaged and cannot be switched to FTL mode until after a "spooling up" period. Bigger ships take longer to spool their FTL drives.

(11.1.1) Purpose: Retreats can be used to deny your opponent a Great or Devastating Victory if playing with the Campaign/Lifetime scoring rules or as required by a scenario.

(11.1.2) Procedure: Retreat is achieved when a ship is able to activate its FTL drive. To do that it must do all of the following:

- spool up her FTL drive (11.1.3)
- slow down to a Speed of 1
- "punch it" (jumping to FTL). This occurs after the Power Phase of a given Round. Other ships or terrain in front of the retreating ship do not matter, the ship leaves normal space. After a ship retreats, set it aside.

(11.1.3) Spooled and Unspooled: At the start of a battle, each ship's FTL is considered to be "unspooled". The FTL becomes spooled during the Power Phase of the Round number equal to that ship's total Hull Boxes.

EXAMPLE: A Terran CA is spooled up by the Power Phase of Round 6.

(11.1.4) Restrictions on Retreats:

- A ship cannot retreat while in a hex with terrain such as a Nebula or Asteroid.
- Bases cannot retreat as they don't have FTL.
- Fighters do not have FTL drives and must dock with Carriers (16.1). They then jump to FTL when the Carrier is eligible to jump.

12. FIGHTERS

12.1 Fighters

(12.1.1) In General: Fighter counters represent 3 fighters flying together in a squadron. FTRs may not be present at a battle unless a Carrier or friendly Base is present at the start of the battle. FTRs may continue in the battle after their Carrier or Base is destroyed.

(12.1.2) Characteristics: Fighters have the following characteristics:

- Because of their small size, FTRs have a minimum Speed of 5. *Fighter NFTL engines must run "hot".*
- FTRs do not have Shield Arcs. Damage is applied directly to the hull of one of the Fighters on the counter.
- Fighters do not have a FTL drive to retreat from battle.
- **Collisions:** Fighter Squadrons suffer and cause the same penalties for being in the same hex as other ships or **other Fighter**

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squadrons of their race. Fighters in the same squadron (i.e., the same counter) do not cause collision damage with each other.

- **Talon Fusion Cannons:** Due to their size and agility, they are able to evade a Talon Fusion Cannon, taking no damage from it. *This makes Fighters ideal to assault larger Talon capital ships*.
- FTRs do not generate AP on their own. They rely on Carrier ships and Bases to provide them with power (12.2).
- When FTRs are destroyed, ships in the same hex and adjacent hexes are not affected by explosion damage.

(12.1.3) Targeting Fighters: When a FTR is targeted by a Weapon, a specific FTR in the squadron must be targeted.

12.2 Powering Fighters

(12.2.1) In General: One Carrier or Base (14.0) can deploy a maximum of 4 FTR squadrons each. Terran CVs and Bases are equipped with phased arrays that can transfer power to Fighters through the vacuum of space.

If there are no friendly Carriers or Bases left in the battle, Fighter groups no longer receive AP. Their Charge Bar Yellow Boxes may still Passively Charge during the Power phase.

(12.2.2) Transmitting Power to FTRs: When a Carrier or friendly Base receives AP, it may spend it on any friendly fighter group instead of itself. The AP may be spent to:

- Actively Charge a Yellow Box on a FTR Weapon Group (*one* ship on the counter may charge *one* Yellow Box).
- Pull a FTR Squadron's Turning Radius marker one hex closer (Powering through a turn [6.1]).
- Enable a side-slip for the FTR Squadron (6.1).

(12.2.3) Restrictions:

- Only one AP may be spent on each Fighter squadron per Impulse.
- The FTR squadron receiving AP must be within *six hexes* of the CV or Base and must *not* be in an Asteroid or Nebula. Planets, Nebulae and Asteroids may block a Fighter from receiving AP just like they block or interfere with fire (17.2.2).

13. MISSILES

13.1 Which Ships Have Missiles

Some Talon ships are equipped with Missile launchers. These ships have an unlimited number of Missiles available.

13.2 Launching Missiles

Unlike other Weapons, when a Missile is fired, the effect is not immediately resolved. Instead, a Missile counter is placed in an adjacent hex within the firing arc of the firing ship. The Missile must *face* a hex side in the direction of the target ship. A Missile may only be fired when the target is in the Firing Arc of the Missile launcher and the target is within range of the firing ship.

The target of each Missile should be announced (sensors can pick these things up) and the number of the Missile counter should be written on the target ship. The Missile may only ever hit that target and will pass through the hex of other units. If targeted against a Fighter squadron, the specific Fighter in the squadron is not chosen until the Missile hits. Missiles may target ships or Fighters, but not other Missiles.

13.3 Target Tracking

Missiles are "smart", have unlimited fuel and will keep tracking toward their targets until they hit or are destroyed. Missiles track independently of their firing ship and are not removed if the firing ship is destroyed.

If the target ship leaves the battle or is destroyed, the Missile continues to move forward and cannot turn. The Missile cannot detonate until a new target is selected (13.7).

13.4 Missile Movement

- Missiles have a Speed of 6 (they move each Impulse).
- Missiles have a Turn Radius of 0. They may turn one hex side each time they move.
- Missiles may not Side Slip.
- The firing player may move a Missile as he sees fit as long as he chooses a hex that is closer to the target (if possible). If two hexes are equidistant to the target, the owner may choose which hex to move it into.
- Missiles may not cause the map to "float" (see Floating Map) and are destroyed if they go flying aimlessly off the map.

13.5 Missile Detonation

When a Missile enters into the same hex as its target, it immediately hits it and does **2 damage** to the Shield Arc it passed through (or the hull if the Shield Arc is down). This is resolved during Movement. It happens *immediately* when either the ship or the Missile moves into the other's hex. Subsequent ship explosion damage should be resolved at this time.

If a Missile moves into the same hex as a non-targeted ship or a friendly ship, nothing happens.

13.6 Shooting Down Missiles:

If a single source of damage ever deals 3 or more damage to a missile, it is destroyed. If a missile takes less than 3 points of damage flip the missile to the damaged side. If a missile is on the damaged side and takes any amount of damage, it is destroyed.

- Missiles do not deal explosion damage when destroyed but may receive explosion damage.
- If multiple Missiles in the same hex are receiving damage from an explosion, damage is only applied to *one* Missile in the hex.
- Damaged missiles still deal 2 damage when they hit their target.
- Destroyed missiles do not count towards degree of victory.

EXAMPLE: Defiant is being targeted by Missile # 4. Fortunately, she has a chance to shoot it down with her charged right Phaser group. Her first Phaser only rolls a 2, dealing two damage to the Missile. This is not enough to destroy a Missile as it needs to take 3

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or more damage from one source to be instantly destroyed. Instead, the Missile is flipped to its damaged side. If this Missile hit Defiant, the ship would still take two damage. However, Defiant still has one more Phaser left to fire in the right weapon group. This time she only rolls a 1, dealing 1 damage to the Missile. This destroys the Missile! If a damaged Missile takes any amount of damage it is destroyed.

13.7 Select New Missile Target

Any ship with a Missile launcher may spend 1 AP to select a new target for any *one* Missile. The new target must be an enemy ship within the Firing Arc and range of the redirecting ship's Missile launcher. The Missile receiving the new target need not be in the Firing Arc of the redirecting ship.

When this occurs, note the missile counter number, write it on the new ship, and erase the number from the old ship.

Immediate Detonation: If the new missile target is already in the same hex as the missile, the missile *immediately* hits the new target during this part of the Impulse. Resolve the damage as above. The Shield Arc hit is determined by rolling one die for each Shield Arc. The highest result is the side that takes damage. In the event of a tie, reroll among the tied Shield Arcs.

14. BASES

Characteristics: Bases are treated like ships in all respects except they cannot move. Their Power Curve does not include a Turn Radius.

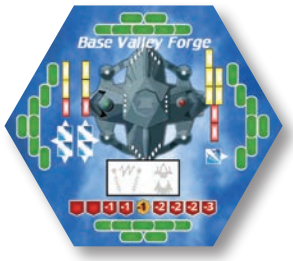
Base Rotation and Speed: The Speed number in their Power Curve represents the Speed of their rotation. Rather than moving when their Speed number appears in the Impulse Chart, the Base must rotate 1 hex side clockwise, at that time. Like ships, the Speed for a Base may only be adjusted up or down by 1 during the Power Phase. A Base's AP is not impacted by the Speed of a Base.

EXAMPLE: A Base with a Speed of 1 will rotate clockwise only once per Round (on Impulse F). A Base with a Speed of 2 will rotate on Impulses C and F, etc.

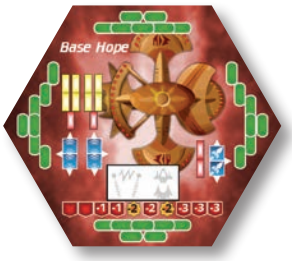
No Collision Damage: If a Base and a friendly ship occupy the same hex no damage is dealt. Bases do not have FTL or NFTL drives so there is no possibility for interference.

Docking: Some ships may dock with Bases (16.1).

Setup: During setup, bases are deployed to the setup area before all other ships, as if they were terrain.



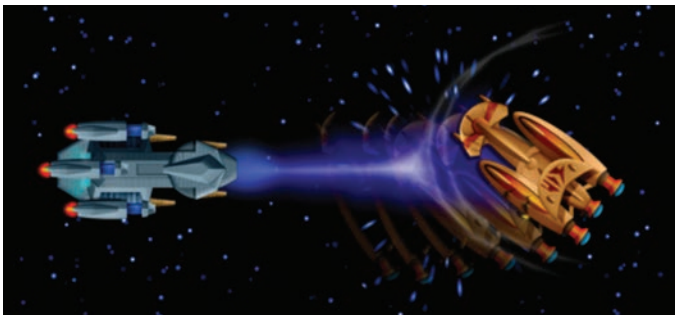
Terran Base



Talon Base

15. THE BIG GUNS

15.1 Wave Motion Gun



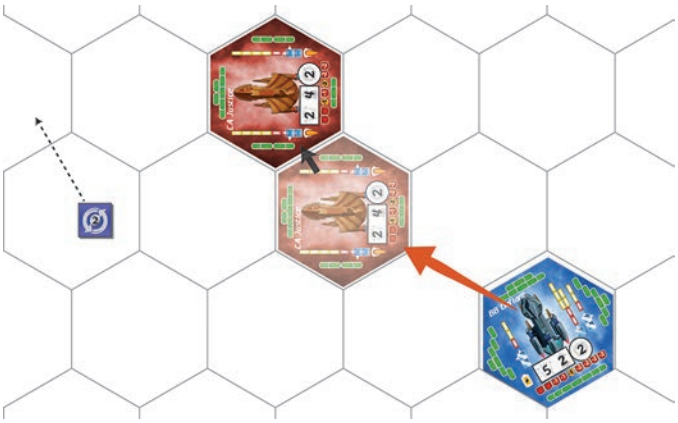
The Wave Motion Gun is the most powerful weapon ever developed by the Terrans. Based on NFTL technology, the blast contains so much energy that a subspace pocket forms behind the target, like a shadow of the vessel's mass. This pocket pulls the target ship towards it, effectively knocking it back.

(15.1.1) Procedure: The Wave Motion Gun has a range of 4 hexes. To determine if it hits the target, consult the Wave Motion Gun table and roll one die. A hit Displaces (15.1.2) the target ship and causes 10 damage points.

(15.1.2) Displace Effect: On a hit, a straight edge is placed from the center of the firing hex through and beyond the center of the target hex. The target ship is displaced one hex away from the firing ship along the straight edge, without changing facing. If the straight edge is exactly along a hex-spine the firing ship may choose a hex on either side of the hex spine.

- If the target ship has a Turn Radius marker, it is shifted along with the target ship such that it remains the same distance in front of the ship.
- If playing with Same Faction Combat and a Fighter is hit by this weapon, the entire Fighter squadron is knocked back.

(15.1.3) Damage from the Weapon is not resolved until after the shift. Any movement related effects are resolved first, such as taking damage for entering a hex with another friendly ship or asteroid (see Collisions [7.4], Ship Destruction [8.6] and Terrain [17.0]). This may mean the target ship could enter a hex with a friendly ship, take damage from the collision, damage the friendly ship, then blow up due to the Wave Motion Gun damage, further damaging the friendly ship. Any ships that exploded might also cause explosion damage to other ships. Chain reactions of explosions are possible.



EXAMPLE: The BB Vanguard fires its Wave Motion Gun at the Talon CA Justice and scores a hit at range 2 on Justice's rear Shield Arc

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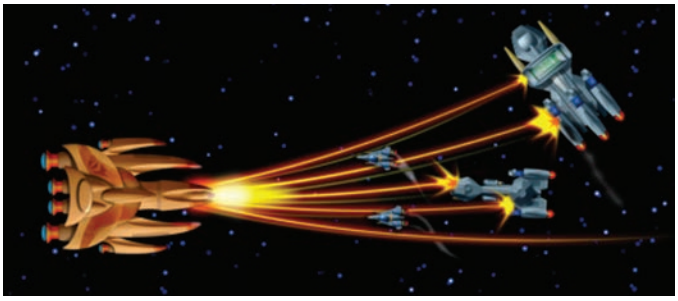
but first the knock-back effect is applied. A straight edge placed from the center of the firing ship's hex through the center of the target ship's hex aligns with the hex spine so the firing ship may choose to shift Justice back to either hex. Justice had a Turn marker that was 2 hexes away. It remains 2 hexes away after the shift. Once the shift is complete, the damage is resolved.

15.2 Fusion Cannon



The Fusion Cannon is composed of multiple, highly destructive beams that scatter to damage many ships over a large area.

(15.2.1) The Fusion Cannon fires in a cone, hitting *all* targets within its Firing Arc and range. The die is only rolled once and that number is used for all firing as per the Player Aid Card. The damage dealt depends on the range of the hex and number rolled.

(15.2.2) Resolving Fusion Cannon Damage:

- Damage is applied to all ships in each hex of the firing cone, including friendly ships.
- While the Fusion Cannon may, inadvertently, damage friendly ships, an enemy ship must be targeted in order to fire the weapon. No weapon may intentionally fire on friendly ships.
- Which ships resolve their damage first is up to the ship owner. If both sides have ships that are being hit by the Fusion Cannon the firing player resolves his ships' damage first.
- Terran Fighter groups are too small and agile to be damaged by the Fusion Cannon and ignore all damage that would be caused by it.

EXAMPLE: The Talon BB Eviscerator fires the Fusion Cannon. It hits every ship within the shaded area which represents the Fusion Cannon's Firing Arc and range of 3. If a 4 was rolled: the Terran CA would take 6 damage on her left Shield Arc, the Talon CA would take 2 damage on her forward Shield Arc and the Terran FTR squadron would take NO damage. Missiles 14 and 15 each take 2 damage and would be flipped over to their damaged sides. Missiles 10 and 11 are not caught in the Fusion Cannon's fire, but if CA Justice exploded, one of the two missiles would take 3 explosion damage. If the CA Guderian exploded, CA Justice would take 3 explosion damage but only one of the 3 FTRs in Flying Tiger Squadron would take Guderian's explosion damage.

16. DOCKING AND LANDING

16.1 Purpose

Docking usually involves either CVs or Bases and is only allowed when required to fulfill a scenario objective or to allow Fighters to retreat from battle aboard CVs. Unless specified by a scenario rule, these units are removed from the battle and may not re-enter space.

Planets may be landed on using these rules as well, but this is only permitted by scenario rule.

16.2 Docking/Landing Procedure

To dock, the player declares during the movement phase that this ship will be docking. They then may move the ship into the same hex as the Base or Planet and remove the ship from the game.

- Docking never causes collision damage.
- A Transport may not dock with a Base or land on a planet unless it is moving at Speed 1.
- FTRs may dock with a Carrier or Base while moving at any Speed. *They are skilled enough to land "hot".*
- FTRs may not undock from a CV or Base except by scenario rule.

16.3 Fighter Squadron Retreats

- Fighter squadrons normally dock with friendly Carriers to retreat from battle (Transports may not, they are too large).
- When a FTR docks, it is then set aside. If the CV is able to jump to FTL, that CV and any docked FTRs are considered to have retreated.
- If a CV containing docked FTRs is destroyed, all FTRs on board are also considered to be destroyed.

17. TERRAIN

17.1 Introduction

- Terrain includes Planets, Asteroids and Nebulae. They are printed onto the backs of most ship counters.
- If Terrain is being used, select the appropriate Asteroid or Nebula counter, checking to make sure that the ship on the reverse side is *not* being used in this scenario.
- Terrain does not move during the course of a battle but, when the "floating" map needs to be shifted, Terrain counters are also shifted, just like ships.
- See the Design Your Own Scenarios section (27.0) for how to select and place Terrain for custom games.
- Ships destroyed by terrain count for the purpose of calculating degree of victory.

17.2 Planets

(17.2.1) Any Missile or Ship besides a landing Transport that moves into the same hex as a planet is destroyed; any adjacent ships take explosion damage as normal. Planets have the following characteristics:

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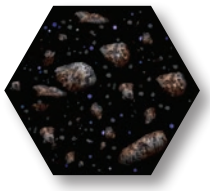
- They are not harmed by explosion damage.
- They cannot be targeted unless specified by scenario rule.
- They may Block Fire (17.2.2)
- Missiles already fired may continue to track to a ship blocked by a planet, but are still destroyed if they move into the planet's hex. They will move into the planet's hex if there is no other closer hex to the target.

(17.2.2) Blocking Fire and Power Transmission: To see if a planet is blocking fire, use a straight edge (use the side of the Player Aid Card) placing it from the center of the firing hex to the center of the target hex. If the straight edge passes through the Planet hex, fire is blocked. Fire is not blocked if it only goes along the Planet hex's spine.

Missiles may not be launched and Power may not be transmitted to FTRs (12.2.2) if the target ship is blocked by a planet.

EXAMPLE: The Talon BB and the Talon CA are in the Terran BB's left and forward fire arcs, respectively. However, when a straight edge is placed from the center of the Terran ship to the center of the Talon BB, the planet blocks the line of fire. The Talon CA, however, can be targeted as the line of fire is traced along a hex spine. In this case the Talon CA would take damage on its rear Shield Arc.



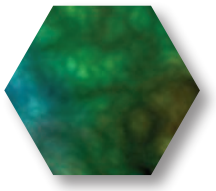
17.3 Asteroids

Asteroids represent clusters of large rocks in space. Small vessels, like Fighters, do not have trouble navigating them, however, bigger ships do. They also affect weapon targeting systems.

Effects: Whenever a ship moves into a hex with an Asteroid counter it will take **1 damage** on that Shield Arc (if the appropriate Shield Arc is down, damage is placed on the hull). If a ship does not move during their Impulse and remains in an Asteroid hex NO damage is taken.

EXCEPTION: Fighters and Missiles *never* take damage from Asteroids.

Asteroid Speed: *A term coined by early space explorers. Asteroid fields could be safely navigated by large ships so long as their Speed was equal to or less than their Power. In this way, they could constantly reinforce their forward shield when they moved through the Asteroid field and not take any permanent damage.*



17.4 Nebula

In reality, Nebulae are collections of countless stars, spanning multiple parsecs. However, as humanity explored space, they found pockets of radioactive gas that interfered with Shields and weapon targeting systems. These early explorers called these clouds "Nebulae", since it was a much more elegant name than "Gas Pocket," the name stuck.

(17.4.1) Effects: Whenever a ship shares a hex with a Nebula counter, *all* of its shields are considered to be *down*. Do not mark off the shields on the ship counter. All Shield Reinforcement markers are destroyed.

- A ship's shields come back online immediately upon exiting the Nebula hex.
- Any damage a ship suffers while in a Nebula is placed directly on the hull.
- Nebulae have no effect on Missiles.
- When a ship leaves a Nebula counter, its shields immediately come back on to whatever level is recorded on their counter.

EXAMPLE: If a ship exits a Nebula hex and collides with a Missile, the damage could be placed on shields, if available.

Note that damage from the Wave Motion Gun is not applied until after the displace effect is resolved. If a ship gets knocked into a Nebula by the Wave Motion Gun, its shields would be down due to the Nebula effect BEFORE the Wave Motion Gun damage is applied.

PLAY NOTE: Fighters love to hide in nebulae since they have no shields to lose.

17.5 Asteroids and Nebulae Affect Weapon Targeting Systems

- If a ship is firing in or through an Asteroid or Nebula subtract one (–1) from the die roll for every Asteroid or Nebula counter the attack would pass through including any in the target ship's hex and/or firing ship's hex. If a die result becomes less than 1, the shot misses.

EXAMPLE: The Terran BB and Talon CA (Justice) are in Asteroid hexes. If the Terran BB fired on the Talon BB (Eviscerator), fire would pass through two Asteroid hexes, including the hex of the firing ship. If the Terran BB fired Torpedoes and rolled a 3, it would be reduced to a roll of 1; a miss. If the Terran BB fired on the Talon CA, fire would be traced through 3 Asteroid hexes, including the hex of the target ship. A roll of 3 would be reduced down to 0 which automatically misses.

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- The Fusion Cannon roll result may be modified differently for each ship it would hit.
- If there is difficulty determining how many Asteroids/Nebulae fire passes through, place a straight edge from the center of the firing hex to the center of the target hex. The terrain hexes the straight edge passes through affect fire. If passing along the hex spine of two hexes containing Asteroids or Nebulae, that only counts as passing through 1 hex.
- Asteroids and Nebulae block Power Transmission from a CV or Base to FTR Squadrons the same way a Planet blocks fire.

18. BLACK HOLES

While rarely encountered, black holes provide a substantial piloting challenge to most ships.

18.1 Effects

- Any ship that collides with a Black Hole is immediately destroyed. Explosion damage is still dealt to adjacent ships. The Black Hole takes no damage.
- Black Holes block fire just like a Planet.
- When firing, if the target ship is closer to the black hole than the firing ship, subtract one (–1) from the die roll due to interference from the Black Hole.
- Ships may not deploy within 2 hexes of a Black Hole.

18.2 Gravity Pull

Once per Round immediately after the Power Phase all ships (including Bases!) must shift one hex closer to the Black Hole. Use a straight edge placed from the center of one hex to the center of the Black Hole hex to determine where each ship will shift. If the straight edge is along a hex spine, the ship's owner chooses the destination hex. The Initiative Player shifts all of his ships first.

- Any collision damage and resulting explosion damage is immediately resolved.
- Ships do not change facing, all Turn Radius markers are shifted accordingly and they are *not* shifted closer to the turning ship due to the Gravity Pull.

19. WORM HOLES

Some scenarios call for Worm Holes which allow ships to instantly retreat from a battle, usually to fulfill a scenario objective. Retreat occurs immediately when the ship collides with the Worm Hole. These are represented by Black Hole counters with an objective marker placed on them. They do *not* act like Black Holes. They do *not* cause ships to shift closer or subtract from firing rolls.

DESIGNER NOTES

The idea for this game came about in 2006 when I was laid up sick (really sick). I couldn't really get out of bed and so, during my waking time, I spent it thinking about this game. It has changed dramatically since then, but that sickness was actually a pretty good start.

My original goal was to develop a playable space combat game that could easily handle fleets of 3-6 ships (or more) on a side. Individual ship actions are nice, but I wanted fleet combat. I also wanted fleet combat involving capital ships and not fighter craft. I wanted big, complicated ships, that had to maneuver and charge systems and not just do an Immelman. For me, it also has to be intuitive and easy to play—hopefully with lots of good decisions. As I say with most of my games, I want my cake and I want to eat it too. I want all the good stuff, but I want it simply.

Vector Movement?

With a tactical space combat game, the first question that needs to be asked is how to handle movement. The vacuum of space means that objects will tend to stay at their same Speed even when thrust is removed (using conventional means). I assume that this is what you mean when you say vector movement. Plus, with vacuum, there is no air to turn against. To go in the opposite direction, all of that thrust needs to be applied in the opposite direction in order to begin to move it the other way. You can't just turn. You might begin to apply thrust to the side, but you retain all of your Speed in the original direction as well. Even games that go with vector movement usually get this wrong.

For example, if you apply thrust for 5 turns in one direction, your Speed will increase in that direction each one of those 5 turns. That ship will then have to apply thrust in the opposite direction for 5 turns just to stop its movement in that direction (slowing each turn) to say nothing of any thrust applied to the side to change direction. If you are in a plane going 500 mph you can turn that plane, keep most of your momentum, and go 500 mph in the other direction. You can't do that in a space ship because there are no aerodynamic/frictional forces at play—there is nothing to turn it against.

Space also means that a ship could easily change its facing. It might still be hurtling forward at the same Speed, but the ship can spin about on its axis and fire in any direction. No frictional or aerodynamic forces would interfere with it doing that (like it would with an atmospheric craft). Even game systems that model space flight at least somewhat accurately tend to ignore this very important point, a point which I find pretty boring in a game.

Of course we are dealing with science fiction here and not science. For this game to take place we have to have Faster Than Light drives, so why not Near Faster Than Light drives? This allowed me to set up the premise for the science fiction universe as I desired. I find this very realistic. First of all, the way I model movement is realistic to my premise. :-) Secondly, and more importantly, the game is realistic to the genre. The ships in this game move and turn as the capital ships do in the major science fiction franchises. When I play science fiction, that is what I am shooting for.

Here is the irony—a space combat game that chooses vector movement in an effort to be realistic has chosen a scientific premise. Yet, if the game allows a ship to turn and keep its momentum or does not allow ships to spin on its axis at will, it is missing the two most important points of its scientific premise. In an effort to be realistic, it has made itself far more unrealistic than a game like Talon. At least Talon is accurate to its premise.

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So, there was no way I was going to go with vector movement. The only reason I would have done it would have been realism, but if I made it truly realistic I would have made a boring game. Every ship would always be able to turn the shield and weapon of its choice against the enemy while the ships zipped around the board in mostly straight lines firing as they passed each other.

Three Dimensional Movement?

The second thing that has to be addressed is three dimensional movement. Do I want to include this in the game? If you have read the rules, you know the answer is, no. My thought on it was that it didn't add really anything to the game. In atmospheric combat, it is critical. Planes climb at a much different rate than they dive, but in space the third dimension doesn't impact the combat any differently than the other two dimensions. It simply wasn't worth the rule investment and complication for something that didn't add anything to the game—except perhaps allowing me to brag about how the game had 3D space combat :-).

Power System

The power system is something that I love. First, the power for the basic systems is baked into the Power Curve. Second, the adjustment of the Power Curve is so easy that it makes playing with a fleet so much easier. Lastly, it forces/allows you to spend power as it becomes available. This is simulating a combat that is taking place fairly quickly and it breaks the suspension of disbelief for me if I have to sit down and plan out something in advance, whether it be moves, or energy allocation, or whatever. I want as many decisions as possible to be made on the fly, as befitting the subject matter. Those of you who are familiar with my game Band of Brothers will notice that same similarity as that game also mimics something that is happening very quickly (WW2 squad combat). You only have a few units to do something with so you just use them. Here you only have one power to spend (or one hex to move) so you just spend it. Sometimes you want to spend it on several things, but you can only choose one.

I suppose the most innovative part of the game is the large, laminated counters. I didn't want to do miniatures (either figurines or cards) because of the inherent problems with movement. There are a lot of extra rules needed for miniature movement (I mean without a hex grid) and it is very time consuming. Of course, there is also a reason why miniature games are sometimes umpired. Just a little change in facing or movement distance can have a big impact on the outcome of the game. I also didn't want a traditional small counter, hex map game. This would require some sort of ship display for every single ship on the board. That quickly becomes complicated, time consuming and a bit of a brain burn when you increase the number of ships. Remember that I wanted the game to easily handle small fleets, and the large, laminated counters became the perfect solution. With everything on the counter, it is so easy.

Development Phase

Of any of the games that I have designed, this one experienced the most change during its development, while it was on P500. As I look back now, I can see that I had focused so much on making a clean design, that I missed some opportunities. Fortunately, my development team kept bringing that up to me. :-) My emphasis can be seen in the changes made. The system that I delivered to the development team is essentially unchanged from the original (I tweaked the changing of initiative to make it simpler—that's it). In one sense it is gratifying to me how robust the system turned out to be. However, the balance and the chrome is completely different than what we started with.

The team is responsible at least in part for afterburners, drastic weapon changes, multiple excel spreadsheets used to calculate and balance point values in the game, the special effects of Fusion and Wave Motion Guns, black holes, nebulae, docking, simplified/easier retreat, drastic changes to CVs, docking, several scenarios, a lot of back story, and many other things. They were great to work with. So, in another sense, I was surprised how much goodness I had left on the table going into development.

Conclusion

The rest of the game design was time consuming, but a lot of fun. With a normally complicated subject made playable, the sky was the limit. The system is pretty modular and the differences in races are easy to design. There are so many variables in the game that are simply adjusted, it is easy to give the races a distinct personality and there are many more that I am already fiddling with. I hope you enjoy the game!

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