Example of Play

Steve and Mike find themselves with 30 minutes at lunch, so they decide to fill it with a game of ACTASF. Let’s look at the first two turns of their game as an example. Remember, this is merely an example of how the rules and systems interact throughout the five phases of each turn. This is not a treatise on tactics!

Steve selects the Federation and fields a task force consisting of a heavy cruiser, a war destroyer, and a frigate. Mike selects the Klingons and fields a D7 battlecruiser, a D5 war cruiser, and an E4 escort. Note that Mike has an advantage in points, but as he has less experience, Steve accepted the point difference as a balancing factor.

The fleets begin 30” apart. (A typical game of ACTASF will have a lot more than three ships per side and the forces will begin farther apart, but three ships is sufficient for an example.)

Turn #1, Initiative Phase: The Federation player rolls D6 (3+6=) 9. The Klingon player rolls D6 (2+5=) 7. The Federation player wins Initiative and tells the Klingon player to move first.

Turn #1, Movement Phase: The Klingon player nominates the E4 (his least important ship). He declares that he’s using the Boost Energy to Shields! special action and rolls 1D6 to determine the boost to his shields. His result is a 1, not a lot but it could be the difference between crippled and not crippled later on. He then moves the E4 frigate 8” toward the Federation fleet. This is not as far as it could move, but he’s hoping to keep the little ship out of overload range. The Klingon player’s ultimate goal is to move the cruisers to a point between the E4 and the Federation fleet, forcing his opponent to fire at the larger cruisers while allowing the escort to sit back and snipe at any seeking weapon launched by the Federation.

The Federation player sees what the Klingon is doing and moves his war destroyer toward the Klingon escort, foregoing any special actions so as to have full use of his power. (There are not enough ships involved for a lot of deception to be used. In a larger battle, one player may send several ships down the left flank before committing the remainder to a massive strike on the right. While this temporarily divides a fleet and risks having the enemy completely overwhelm one element, there are sometimes reasons to risk it.)

The Klingon player reacts decisively with a bold move. He nominates the D7 (using no special actions) and moves it 12” towards the war destroyer, putting it directly between the DW and the E4.

The Federation follows up by moving the heavy cruiser straight at the D7. After all the movement is complete, the Federation player declares that he is turning to centerline the D7. This will allow it to bring maximum firepower to bear on the D7.

The Klingon then moves the D5 forward into a position near the D7 where it can provide supporting fire. At the end of movement, the Klingon player turns the ship so as to have the boundary of the forward and starboard arcs facing the Federation heavy cruiser. With most Klingon ships, this firing arc boundary is important as it will allow the greatest number of weapons to fire at a single target.

The Federation player then moves his final ship (the frigate) to a position where it can fire on any of the Klingon ships.

After all six ships have moved we find the three Federation ships approximately 6” from the D5 and D7; the E4 is 10” away.

Turn #1, Long-Range Drone Attack Phase: As this is the first turn of the game, there are no drone swarms on the board and this phase is skipped.

Turn #1, Attack Phase: Having won the Initiative (and knowing to “Never let a Klingon shoot first!”), the Federation player elects to attack first. (There are several strategies for determining which ship should fire first. They are all valid under the right circumstances, but this is not the place to go into that.) Steve nominates the heavy cruiser and considers his targeting options. It’s pretty much assured that a full alpha strike can cause either of the Klingon cruisers to have a bad day, or put the E4 out of action. The trick here is that while the Klingons have more or less the same amount of firepower each turn, the photon torpedoes of the Federation can only be fired every other turn (and require a special action to reload them on the “off” turn), but when they fire, they pack a wallop! The Federation player decides to wallop the D7.

The nominated ship is required to declare the target of all weapon actions before a single die is rolled, even if this may result in overkill. Wanting maximum bang for the buck, the Federation player declares that the heavy cruiser will fire four photon torpedoes and six phaser-1s at the D7. To add insult to injury, he’s even launching a drone at the D7.

In ACTASF the attacking player can attack with the weapons in any order he chooses and each hit is resolved before the next attack is rolled. As with attack priorities, there are several thoughts on the proper order for attacks. We are doing it the simple way, from the top of the stat block to the bottom. The Federation player first attacks with six phaser-1s by rolling 6D6. (Technically, each line of two Attack Dice should be rolled as a separate attack, but for speed and simplicity we are rolling them all at once.) The results are 3, 4, 2, 5, 6, and 5. With an accurate Steve, the Federation player will score eight points of damage on the D7 and it is well inside the Kill Zone range of 8”. This results in a total of 10 hits to the shield and two hits that bypass the shield to strike the hull. Steve then rolls 2D6 for these hits and consults the Attack Table. Results of 2 and 5 (+1 for the phasers’ Precise trait) cause one solid hit and one critical hit. The systems roll of 1 hits the impulse drive (which drops maximum speed by 2” per turn). The four photons are rolled next and JACKPOT! The rolls are 6, 6, 6, 6, which means that all 16 points of damage bypass the shields and strike the ship (and he also wins the Yahtzee game). Rolling 16 D6s and consulting the Attack Table yields three misses, 10 solid hits, and three critical hits. The three critical hits will also cause a point of damage, so 13 additional points of damage are scored on the D7 (15 points damage so far) and the three critical hits are rolled on the system chart (1, 1, 3). This is two more critical hits to the impulse drive and one to the weapons, but photons are Devastating +1 so each critical hit actually scores two levels of critical damage. The two on the impulse drive become four points of damage and the one scored on the weapons becomes two points of damage. These are scored on the 2, 3, 4, and 5 columns, with each level of damage being scored before the next.

Impulse 2: This results in one additional point of damage and an additional -2” to speed, for 16 total damage and -4” to speed. (Note that in ACTASF “Impulse 2” is not a step during the turn, but the second critical hit on the impulse drive.)

Impulse 3: Two additional points of damage and +1 Crew critical hit and a possibility to Escalate for 18 total damage.

Impulse 4: Two additional points of damage and the D7 is “Running Adrift” with 20 total damage.

Impulse 5: D6 points of damage [four additional points], and increase the Dilithium Chamber Critical Score by 1 for 25 total damage points and the D7 is crippled. There is a 50% chance for each trait to be lost, but all it loses is the Anti-Drone.

Crew Critical 1: No additional damage, lose one Marine unit.

Dilithium Chamber Critical 1: No additional damage, -2” to maximum speed, and lose 5 shields.

Weapon Critical 1: No additional damage, but all weapons now have a -1 penalty to hit.

Weapon Critical 2: One additional damage point and one random weapon destroyed for 26 total damage; the forward phaser-1s are destroyed.

Now Steve rolls for the drone to hit. The number needed is the ship’s speed divided by 2. A crippled ship has a maximum speed of 6, so Steve needs a 3 or better. The drones are Accurate +2, so anything but a 1 hits. Steve rolls a 5 and the drone hits. The D7 gets defensive fire, but the phaser-1s are gone and the anti-drone has been disabled. In desperation, Mike launches a drone as a counter-drone. KABOOM! The two drones meet in mid-flight and destroy each other.

Now it’s the Klingon’s turn. Seeing that his D7 is pretty much a flaming wreck, Mike decides to fire the D5 and nominates it. Looking at its limited firepower and really wanting to kill something, he decides to target the Federation frigate. Targeting it with four disruptors, five phaser-1s, two phaser-2s, and two drones, Mike feels confident about his chances. With very good rolls, the D5’s firepower overpowers the frigate’s shields and leaves it a crippled hulk, although the frigate does make a lucky roll and grabs both incoming drones with her tractor beams and destroys them before they can impact.

The Federation player knows the frigate has very little chance...
to damage anything, so he nominates the war destroyer and considers his options. He could target the D7 and with any luck at all it would be destroyed. Steve could fire at the undamaged D5 and put a pretty good dent in it, or he could fire at the E4 and leave it a wreck. Since the E4 has yet to fire, Steve opens fire on the E4 with everything the DW has. Successful hits with everything, including the drone, leaves the E4 a shattered hulk.

At this point Mike, the Klingon player, has two ships that haven’t fired, both of which are crippled. The Federation player has a single crippled ship that has not yet fired its weapons. Since crippled ships can only fire a single weapon bank, both players “go through the motions” and nominate each ship in turn and fire its only weapon. Little additional damage is scored and we move onto the End Phase.

**Turn #1, End of Turn Phase, Damage Control:** Each ship is now allowed to select a single Critical Hit location and attempt to repair it. A Crew Quality Check is made and for every point in excess of 8, one level of Critical Hit at that location is repaired.

The D7 goes first and selects the impulse drive and rolls a 6 on a D6. With Crew Quality of 4, a roll of 6 equals 10. This means that two levels of the Impulse Drive Critical Score are repaired, reducing it to level 3. The D7 is no longer “Running Adrift” although it is still subject to Escalate rules.

The remaining ships roll for their Damage Control (those that have critical hits at least). There is no Compulsory Movement in this turn, so we move on to the Escalate Phase.

**Escalate:** The D7 is the only ship with any critical scores still at an Escalate level, so Mike rolls a D6 for the impulse drive and gets a 3. The damage is so severe that it increases one level on its own and the D7 takes a level 4 critical hit on the impulse drive (again!). This results in three more points of damage and the D7 is once again “Running Adrift” [29 points of total damage].

**Turn #2, Initiative Phase:** The Federation player rolls 2D6 (1+4=) 5. Mike, the Klingon player rolls 2D6 (3+4=) 7. This wins Initiative and (with a sneer in his voice) Mike tells the Federation player to move first.

**Turn #2, Movement Phase:** The Federation player, wanting to give the Klingons every opportunity possible to “show their hand” and move the crucial ships, moves his crippled frigate first. The frigate advances forward 4” (the new, crippled Turn Score) and turns to place its centerline on the adrift D7.

The Klingon player, being suddenly cagey despite his inexperience, nominates the D7 which is “Running Adrift” and cannot maneuver of her own volition (nothing happens).

The Federation DW moves next, advancing 4” to take a position facing the D7.

Wanting to see his final play before committing the only ship with any firepower remaining, the Klingon nominates the crippled E4 which heads toward the edge of the map at best speed.

Expecting the worst, the Federation captain next nominates his undamaged heavy cruiser which moves 4” forward and joins its fellow ships in a stalwart line of defense against the Klingon aggressors.

After confirming that ACTASF has no rules for ramming (and being unable to convince his opponent otherwise), Mike uses his superior maneuverability to move outside the firing arc of some of the heavy cruiser’s phasers and uses the Reload! special action to get ready for a nice round of revenge.

**Turn #2, Long-Range Drone Attack Phase:** As all ships were close enough for drones to impact immediately in Turn #1, there are once again no drone swarms on the board. This phase is skipped and we go straight to the Attack Phase.

**Turn #2, Attack Phase:** Since the Klingons have Initiative (and a ship with overloaded weapons), they elect to fire first. The D5 is nominated first and the Klingon captain considers his options. An alpha strike on the heavy cruiser is not going to kill it, but it does have the possibility of crippling her. On the other hand, the D5 has a very good chance of getting a mission kill on the war destroyer. After much vacillation, the Klingon player decided to go for the nearer ship and the better odds of hitting, even if the overall effect may be less. A short-range alpha strike (with overloaded disruptors) against the heavy cruiser resulted in severe damage, but was just shy of crippling it.

The Federation player nominates the war destroyer and carefully calculates its fire. Two phaser-1s were fired at the E4, two more at the D7, and the remaining phasers were targeted on the D5. A drone was launched at the rapidly escaping E4. The phasers fired at the E4 missed, but the drone did not. The already crippled E4 is now in serious shape with only one damage point remaining. The two phasers targeted on the D5 merely ding its shields. Both phasers targeted on the D7 miss, scoring no additional damage [29 total damage points of 31 possible]. And finally, the drone targeted on the D7 which hits on anything other than a one rolls a one and misses. That’s one lucky D7!

Fearing it may not have another chance, the Klingon player next nominates the D7. (Ships that are “Running Adrift” can still fire; they just cannot use voluntary movement.) It targets the heavy cruiser with disruptors. After all of the penalties associated with a crippled ship, only two of the four hits, but the overall damage is enough to cripple the heavy cruiser.

The Federation player nominates the heavy cruiser, which can now only fire a single weapon bank (due to the crippled status). The heavy cruiser fires a bank of 2 Attack Dice of phaser-1s at the D5 and scores more shield damage.

The crippled E4 is the last ship nominated by the Klingon player. It fires its aft-arc phaser-2s at the Federation frigate and scores a hit. The resultant damage reduces the frigate to -2 points and the Klingon player rolls on the Stricken Ships Table and gets an 8 (D6 roll of 6 + the 2 points of damage beyond 0 scored by the E4). This means the frigate will explode at the end of the Turn #3 Movement Phase.

It’s now the Federation player’s turn, but the frigate has been destroyed and cannot attack this turn.

**Turn #2, End of Turn Phase:** All ships roll for Damage Control and apply repairs. No one suffers from Compulsory Movement. During the Escalation Phase, several ships have Critical Scores that escalate, including the D7, which immediately blows up. The exploding ship causes 16 Attack Dice of damage to every unit (allied or enemy) within a 4” blast radius. Fortunately, no ships were inside the blast zone.

**Turn #3:** The Klingon D5 uses the Maximum Warp Now! special action and attempts to disengage, and barely succeeds. The Klingon D4 continues moving toward the map edge, but will be hunted and destroyed by a Federation war destroyer.

The Federation war destroyer will live to fight again. The Federation heavy cruiser will take another turn of pounding from the D5 as it overruns her during the disengagement. It will also be caught at the extreme edge of the blast radius from the frigate and suffer even more damage. She will make it home, but as little more than a hulk and will not return to duty until long after the war is over.

The Federation frigate will explode, but not before evacuating her entire crew onto the heavy cruiser.