Just wanted to stick my head in and say Hi. Finally picked up a copy of the 2010 edition, previously all I had played was the '93, and played a lot of it at the time. Finished reading the archives and have some things to say about everybody's favorites, the Hydrans (which I play in SFB too). Still trying to absorb the newer rules and sort out my thoughts.

SL:

Welcome to the site. Please know that F&E will be featured in your region this summer in Nashville during ADB sponsored StratCom event, 7-14 June. Come see us and play F&E with some of the world's finest players. Cheers.

Yes, SL, it will be in Murfreesboro, TN. That is about five hours from St. Louis.

I would love to attend StratCom, however Assistant Scoutmaster Steve is going to be at BSA summer camp the following week... That being said I saw that there are a couple of programs that can be used for play-by email. So which one does everybody use?

SL: There are two main programs used. Cyberboard and Vassal. I'm personally in favor of Cyberboard. Lawrence has done a fantastic job of producing a beautiful game box with tons of markers. However, Vassal players tend to disagree with me, so you'd have to compare both to make your own decision.
My favorite thing about Cyberboard is it's just a simple .exe file, and can run off a USB drive without needing to be "installed" on a computer. You can run it on any windows machine (sorry, no MAC), anywhere. Hotel, library, home. It's also easier to do a PBEM game. The "move file" management is easier.

My favorite thing about Vassal is that it's a real-time program. You can play somebody across town, across the country, or across the world, and you can each see the same thing as it happens. If you'd rather play live (as opposed to e-mail) then this is the better program. Pair it with Skype for an audio chat, and it's like being at the same table.

I've used both for PBEM and I definitely like Cyberboard a lot better. I've used Vassal to play through over 30 turns of 4PW and the general war, and Cyberboard for around twice that.

One very large advantage for Cyberboard is that the map is a lot less crowded. Multiple counters in one hex can be visible, or you can overlap them in such a way that you can still see what is there. You rarely have to move counters to get at other counters underneath them. In Vassal, you have one stack of counters per hex, which if stacked more than a few overflow the hex and can obscure what is in other hexes. You can expend a stack so you can get at individual counters, but it's still a chore compared to the ease that this can be done in Cyberboard.

I can't say which is more used by people beyond my personal experience, but within that scope Cyberboard seems to be used a lot more. I have played games with around a dozen people using Cyberboard, but only one person using Vassal.

There are some things in Vassal that I like better (primarily the ability to have more than two fleet windows open at once). The only reason I use Vassal is to play against people who simply can't use
Cyberboard (generally MAC users).

If I *had* to play real time over the internet, I'd just use skype and a chat channel (so that conversation is recorded) and play via cyberboard over using vassal.

I find it harder to keep track of what is going on with Vassal. Cyberboard offers better ways of keeping notes, tracking the year things happen, etc etc.

By chris upson (Misanthropope) on Friday, February 07, 2014 - 01:27 pm: Edit

vassal is my first choice for how to play F&E, and i prefer "no, thanks" to cyberboard.

the difference between holding boxes and lists of ships is kind of a trivial thing technically, but it makes a giant difference when you have 40 ships in foremost and 50 in red claw, and you need to allocate your resources between them properly.

i also personally find the "unit summary" feature in vassal worth more than any other feature in either platform, by a very large margin. playing on a physical board it requires a lot of organization to keep from running low or out of some vital specialty ship in one of your three theaters, and being able to locate 100% of your D6Ms in five seconds flat saves a lot of menial labor.

you can get the pin count and aggregate compot of a 70 ship fleet in about twenty seconds, by stacking them up and hovering the cursor over the stack. also a pretty handy feature.

i found the large hexes of cyberboard to be more aesthetic (and it *is* aesthetic) than practical. if you pan out far enough to be able to see enough of the map to do anything, you can't make individual counters out easily.

the "move file" functionality in cyberboard is really great, and everything about CB is first rate from an aesthetic perspective. but
for actual functionality, i think vassal is much better than physical F&E, and CB is significantly worse.

By Richard B. Eitzen (Rbeitzen) on Friday, February 07, 2014 - 03:13 pm: Edit

I've found the large hexes of Cyberboard to be enormously helpful.

I can see an area of 13x8 hexes. I have saved a screen shot to the link below:

http://imgur.com/KAklFdy

Using the number markers, we keep track of SEQs of each fleet counter, visible on the map at all times. Most hexes you can see exactly what is there without using fleet counters. Much more information about what is going on is clearly visible without having to click anything at all than you can manage at Vassal.

It's got nothing to do with how nice the map is.

I play on a 1200p monitor. I used to play on a 1600p monitor, but that one is currently not working. If you have some sort of multiple monitor setup, you can get an even fuller view of a game.

By Mike Parker (Protagoras) on Friday, February 07, 2014 - 04:19 pm: Edit

Yeah I have to agree with Richard. I have used vassal and frankly salivate over some of its features, but its honestly too cluttered for me, it it had big hexes so you could have stuff piled in there and see them that would convert me I think.

With Vassal I found myself stacking everything together then moving it only to realize oh crap I moved a convoy 6 hexes by mistake! With Cyberboard its easy and convenient to segregate stuff into functional piles like fleets, police ships, and slow ships.

The aesthetics are nice but I play 3rd Reich and Blitzkrieg over the board (at least in the past) so its not a game setteler for me.
Quote:

You can run it [Cyberboard] on any windows machine (sorry, no MAC), anywhere.

Matt Smith- by the book you are correct, but I've be using it under WINE on Linux for years. I suspect it would thus be usable anywhere WINE works. Per http://www.winehq.org/about/, WINE works on MACs, Linux, and the various *BSDs.

I’m not sure how much of this translates to the new rules, but back in the olden days of the ‘93 edition...

F&E’s favorite topic of discussion; The Hydrans. Everyone wants them to be the magic bullet that wins the game, and they are, but not in a flashy way. The Feds always get all the credit. They are the Perturabo of F&E – Kudos to anyone who knows the reference without googling it.

Someone else posted earlier that the Lyrans are the Klingon’s bully. A statement I completely agree with. The Lyrans provide density, the Klingons provide attrition.

So how do you make it so the Feds get all the glory? The Hydrans get the best of both worlds, they can field density and attrition, but their attrition is their fighters, which are their limiting factor in combat as they don’t have the economy to replace lost ships. The Hydrans can’t out-attrition the Klingon, but can match the Lyran density. So. The plan.

Fight a war of attrition with the Lyrans, and keep the fleet mostly intact to force the Klingon to keep a bunch of SEs in the area and only fight them when you’re defending.
Two different races, two different strategies: divide and conquer, which means I can’t let them set up a joint defensive position. Only way I can see that happening is to not get pushed all the way off the map. The plan:

Turn 3 I want to hit the Lyrans. With all the CA/DD/FFs in the Enemy’s Blood Fleet that will grow up to be bigger meaner ships, in my experience, the Lyrans typically don’t come out and play on turn 3. So I’m piling every ship I have into Lyran space to destroy the two BATS in 0212 & 0413, and pin whatever ships are at the SB in 0411. By destroying the BATS the Lyran can no longer make it to 0617 or the province with the BAT in 0318.

The BAT in 0318 is my fallback position from where I make my last ditch attempt to stay on the map. So I’ve had my offensive fun, now it’s time to defend. Hydran defense is all about what to do with the two MBs you start with. Where do they go? The answer depends on what the CO do.

If is Zin first I’m setting them both up over my Capita. Either they Klingons have to jump before they are ready, or they get to do a capital assault against 3SBs, a Fleet, and PDUs. I’ll stay for that fight. I also upgrade the BAT at 0318 to a SB for when the capital falls.

If the Hydran is first I deploy one MB with BAT at 312, and upgrade both to SBs, and take the other MB to the old colonies.

In the olden days this work, in general, really well.

I would have to give that some serious thought, but at first blush my question is "where are you getting the EP to build these SB's?" the Hydrans are already in a huge economic crunch just to build PDU's and a non laughable amount of ships. Every EP you put into a SB is an ep that is not spent on ships. SB's work well as defense multipliers if you have lots of ships to fly over them, not so much if
your fleet is anemic.

I would be interested to see an economic plan to build PDU's at the capital, upgrade a MB to a SB and upgrade a BATS to a SB by say turn 6 or 7 (assuming a Kzinti first) and see what is left for building the Royal Navy.

By Steven Lang (Slang) on Saturday, February 08, 2014 - 03:08 pm: Edit

I saw the earlier debate of PDUs vs SBs. I’m in the SB camp. The way I see it it’s not how my fleet relates to the Klingons when they show. It’s about getting the most bang for my EPs.

12 PDU at 7EP each is 84EP.
Each PDU takes 11 points of damage to destroy (5DD and 6 for the fighters); for a total of 132 points of damage, or 1.57 Damage per EP spent.

2SB at 51EP each is 102EP.
Each SB takes 192 points of damage to destroy (8DD SIDs, + 36 to kill the cripple and 12 for fighters) or 3.76 Damage per EP spent. If I do voluntary SIDs its only 84 points of damage or 1.65 Damage per EP spent.

This is a straw man and I understand that Maulers, and “G” Ships, and SAF are variables, but so is the variable EW of the SB. Realistically the actual Damage per EP for a SB would be between the 1.65 and 3.76 above., and the total damage taken for the SBs will likely be double that of the PDUs.

In short I pass on PDUs for SBs.

I’m not going into just what I build, it’s a proprietary trade secret, but based on the example in the book my spending would look like:

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<td>74</td>
<td>36</td>
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Both BATs in Turn 4, one SB each in 5 and 6.

By **Thomas Mathews (Turtle)** *on* Saturday, February 08, 2014 - 05:31 pm: [Edit]

Steven, some late war fleets, especially those fleets with X-Cruisers (mauler effect without shock) have the potential to cripple a SB in one shot. In a different topic there are Klingon fleets designed by players with the compot totaling 180+. At 35% damage with one 10 point mauler or X-cruiser this will cripple a SB in one round. There are 5 different BIR and Die Roll combinations that will yield a 35% damage roll directly, and 10 more that will result in more than enough damage.

By **Stewart Frazier (Frazikar2)** *on* Saturday, February 08, 2014 - 07:19 pm: [Edit]

Hmmm, and just how are you keeping those 74 EPs, fighting the Coalition outside Hydran space?

...and for the record, the Lyrans CAN attack 318 and 617, they just can't stay [but that's why 416 is important]

By **Steven Lang (Slang)** *on* Sunday, February 09, 2014 - 12:54 pm: [Edit]

@Thomas. I agree that X-ships taking a SB with direct damage late works. Absolutely. But if the Hydran is still sitting in their Capital when the X-ships arrive, wouldn’t the CO have some other problems? The premise for what I posted was that the Zin were going to get hammered first, and the Hydrans second, and what I posted was the way (at least in the ’93 version) that I think you could hurt them the worse.

@Stewart. Obviously the Hydran won’t have all 74 every turn, but as long as there is enough for the base upgrades, which there should be, the rest gets spent of mobile units. I also agree that the Lyrans can get to 0318 and 0617, but what force level are you
willing to commit? Ultimately no matter what the Hyrdan does if the Lyrans/Klingons want them off the board, they are getting pushed off the board. What I am proposing is just to be as big a monkey wrench in the CO plans as possible.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Sunday, February 09, 2014 - 01:20 pm: Edit

Steven, one of the big changes from 93 to 2KX is how multi base systems are handled. You no longer gain the full compot of the 2nd or more bases under (302.212) and the subsequent subrules.

Try it a couple of times and you will probably change your tactics.

By Tim Losberg (Krager) on Sunday, February 09, 2014 - 05:01 pm: Edit

Quote:

Matt Smith- by the book you are correct, but I've be using it under WINE on Linux for years. I suspect it would thus be usable anywhere WINE works. Per http://www.winehq.org/about/, WINE works on MACs, Linux, and the various *BSDs.

I've been using it in WINE in MacOS for years, works like a charm...

By Ken Kazinski (Kjkazinski) on Sunday, February 09, 2014 - 05:18 pm: Edit

Plus don't you have to consider you have to upgrade to the SB where you can produce the PDU?

By Gary Carney (Nerroth) on Sunday, February 09, 2014 - 05:32 pm: Edit

Steven:

Are you mainly interested in the Hydrans as they are in the General War, or have you had a look at some of the alternate scenarios they have been featured in?

For example, in another corner of the BBS, a WIP revision to
the **Four Powers War** scenario is currently being worked on. Cordon Foxtrot from the **Driving Winds** scenario in **ISC War** looks at what the Kingdom was up to during the Pacification. And the **Vudar portion of the Minor Empires discussions** covers one particular faction set to cause the Hydrans trouble by the General War's end, once that module is formally published in the not-too-distant future.

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**By chris upson (Misanthropope) on Sunday, February 09, 2014 - 06:38 pm:** Edit

steven

with either the hydrans or zin, it isn't realistic to expect you can pin the coalition out of the hex you want to fortify. you pay to upgrade to a starbase, on the coalition turn it's still a BATS, and on your next turn it's a crater.

since the principal line of play (at least in the sample of games reported on this site) involves stomping the hydrans as hard and fast as possible, the fart-breathers can't get fancy.

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**By Tim Losberg (Krager) on Sunday, February 09, 2014 - 07:31 pm:** Edit

As the Alliance, I tend to upgrade a bats if I am trying to force a fight they may be ill prepared for. especially if they just had a high cost assault I either A: Force the coalition to damage more ships, overloading their repair capacity, or.. B: get a base

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**By Mike Parker (Protagoras) on Monday, February 10, 2014 - 09:03 am:** Edit

a SB is very effective sitting over a PDU laden planet addign 48 Compot and 1ew a round (or less cpt more ew very nive options). But for a coalition fleet sitting over a capital with intentiions to take it, if you don't put alot of PDU's up I am very happy. PDU's are basically free rounds of trading his fleet for your planet bases with minus points at very favourable rates of exchange. A SB is nice, but if I bring enough to take the hex I likely can just sit and let damage fall forcing you to self SIDS the SB and or cripple your fleet.
Also don't forget PDU's provide 1 EW each (max of 4) so they are pretty good EW platforms also.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Sunday, March 30, 2014 - 09:29 am: Edit

Having reread a lot of the older archives, I just thought of a couple of things that are very unusual.

1. The Kzintis could attempt to build a colony at 1704 starting on turn 1. While not all that cost effective, it is possible for them to complete the colony and add 3 PDUs to it. It must be co-located with the Starbase. Any raid would then have to fight under the starbase guns. Kicking it out of small scale combat and into regular combat. The Kzintis probably won't have the money to actually build the 3 PDUs even with the ENG saving you 5 EPs on 2 of them.

2. If the Coalition allows the Federation to go to Limited War, either on turn 7 or earlier, then the Federation would be well advised to consider building a colony and adding PDUs to the 4th Fleet Starbase similar to the Kzintis above.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Sunday, March 30, 2014 - 10:09 am: Edit

PDUs can't be deployed in inactive fleet areas.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Sunday, March 30, 2014 - 10:45 am: Edit

The Marquis area is not inactive. The Klingons can attack the Marquis area at will, but only at the risk of allowing the Federation to go to Limited War which appears in all cases to hurt the Klingons more than help them. The Kzintis can maneuver any way they wish through the Marquis territory.

The 4th Fleet is inactive until the Federation goes to Limited War (turn 7, if not Klingon Invasion, or early if Klingons attack the Kzinti Marquis area.).

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Sunday, March 30, 2014 - 11:24 am: Edit
Turtle,

With respect to you, the Marquis area is inactive.

If it were not inactive, you could put a second starbase there.

I'm sure that it's been ruled that a second SB can't be set up in the Marquis, otherwise it would be a standard strategy.

601.12 second para

Quote:

The Marquis area remains an “unreleased fleet” until the Federation enters the war or until the Klingons invade this area, so any bases there cannot be upgraded and no new ones can be built. Hexes 1705 and 1805 are part of the Duke’s fleet, so while that BATS in 1805 can be upgraded, a Coalition attack on it will not activate the Federation.

NOTE: The rule says bases. Bases are a very specific item. It doesn't say anything about a colonies.

Right. The idea is the same. It's an unreleased area. You can certainly put the colony there but you can't put PDUs there.

Thanks Chris, I knew the rule was somewhere.
has any alliance player ever made a serious attempt to run the Romulans out of small escorts? I just finished up a GW game where my opponent was working that plan and it was showing some promise.

The game was decided by an imbalance farther west (which I guess is usually how it goes), but by about turn 18 I started finding myself putting up SPB/FHM/SPM/ groups, which is kind of embarrassing, really.

...even though that gimped group is STILL denser than a fed CVS group. Romulans are kind'a cool, I can't lie.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Thursday, April 10, 2014 - 04:08 pm: Edit

I'm trying to figure out how easy it would be to run the Roms out of small escorts, considering that even the K4Ds and SEE s and SNE s are actually quite good in that role. I mean, the Roms have tons of those, so it would take a pretty dedicated campaign to get rid of all of them.

By Richard B. Eitzen (Rbeitzen) on Thursday, April 10, 2014 - 04:26 pm: Edit

and more from msy

By Rob Padilla (Zangar) on Thursday, April 10, 2014 - 05:46 pm: Edit

I think it’s more of an inability to replace them over time. Generally the ships needed will not be on a SB for conversion, and the Roms can struggle to build their full schedule let alone convert extra escorts. The loss of CEDS hurts them a bit too.

By chris upson (Misanthropope) on Thursday, April 10, 2014 - 11:57 pm: Edit

the Romulans start with a cool six dozen five and four factor ships (not counting the SNB). But you only have five on the build schedule before 178. I was fighting a heck of a lot more than five battle rounds per turn, I’ll tell you that.
Build some minor shipyards to help out with that.

Of course. but your initial drawdown of little ships can be fairly rapid- i mean you definitely like using cheapos with cloaks to mess with the federation economy.

My opp probably started targeting SNEs and K4Ds on turn 13, just as a way to whittle my pin count while still dropping enough damage to contend for whatever hex was in question. My first minor yard was a sparrowhawk, because that's usually what i run short of. Until there is a supply line from the lyrans to the romulans, the pointy eared ones tend to run short on cash (or more accurately, run long on great ships available to build). Just throwing down four SEH/ SK yards paying out of pocket isn't necessarily easy to do.

I got F&E excited about playing the alliance, but after reading the rulebook and playing with the opening setup I see that it is easier for a new player, or me anyway, to understand the coalition. Attacking is easy, defense is not as easy to understand in F&E.

How do the Kzinti generally defend the Lyran border? I would know what to do if the counts fleet had half a dozen more FFs and CLs, but with so little there... I really don't see what to do other than just leaving the BATS undefended and staying on the SB, or only defending 1 bats with 4 ships to at least do a little damage in that one fight. Is that it, that the Kzinti and Hydrans can't really afford to defend BATS or am I not understanding something?

Marc, what part of the world do you live in?
Reason I am asking, we are having StratConII in early June and it would be a great time to spend 8 days with a bunch of other F&E players.

By **Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang)** on Wednesday, April 16, 2014 - 04:23 pm: Edit

I am in Denver, CO. I have actually read just about all the messages in the F&E section over the last few months so I am aware of StratCon. I know the kind of people who play Steve's games... I am hoping to go to StratCon next year, this year I'd be like a 5-year-old trying to argue physics with Albert Einstien. A little bit out of my league among that group having never actually played a game yet:-)

By **Ryan Opel (Ryan)** on Wednesday, April 16, 2014 - 04:57 pm: Edit

Marc,

We are very patient with 5 year olds. I mean we do have a guy who is going to be coming dressed as a Hydran.

We can easily run a training game while we are there or you could team up with with someone and jointly play a side.

By **Peter Bakija (Bakija)** on Wednesday, April 16, 2014 - 04:58 pm: Edit

Marc wrote:

>>I got F&E excited about playing the alliance, but after reading the rulebook and playing with the opening setup I see that it is easier for a new player, or me anyway, to understand the coalition. Attacking is easy, defense is not as easy to understand in F&E.>>

Well, here is the thing. I think basic, unexpanded F+E is still (25+ years later) moderately unbalanced in the direction of the Coalition. Early in the game, the Coalition have all the money and all the momentum. I mean, like, if they are over zealous and make some grand strategic errors (like killing the Kzinti instaed of the Hydrans, or killing both the Kzinti and the Hydrans and then immediately attacking the Feds on T7), they can go off the rails. But careful,
considered, conservative play by the Coalition can see the Alliance get really mangled early in the game, and have a lot of trouble coming back.

As a new player, I'd very much suggest playing the Coalition vs someone who is more seasoned playing the Alliance, as even if the as the new guy, you end up crashing and burning as the Coalition in the long run, in the short run, you'll still have a great time demolishing an Alliance Capital or two :-) 

>>How do the Kzinti generally defend the Lyran border? >>

Poorly? Really, if the Kzinti set up their initial T1 forces correctly, the Lyran attack on T1 isn't actually that bad (keep very close track of where the Kzinti Duke's Fleet, the one on the Klingon Border, can be set up--if you pay attention, most of that fleet can be set up in a hex that allows it to react to Lyran attacks on T1).

But really, all the Kzinti can hope to do on T1 is keep the Count's SB alive and maybe damage some Lyrans. If they Lyrans are aggressive, they can leave a whole bunch of ships within 6 hexes of the Kzinti Capital at the end of T1, and even if it isn't that good of an idea for the Coalition to try and take Kzinti early in the game, if the Kzinti make it easy, it is going to be worth doing.

>>Is that it, that the Kzinti and Hydrans can't really afford to defend BATS or am I not understanding something?>>

Pretty much that. They can't really afford to defend BATS to heavily. But again, pay attention do where the Duke's Fleet can be set up (which can get you another dozen ships into play on T1). But even then, the Lyrans can kill a couple BATS on T1 without much effort, and can kill the SB if you defend the BATS too heavily.

By Mike Curtis (Fear) on Wednesday, April 16, 2014 - 05:10 pm: Edit

Marc, we would still be glad to have you. There will be a training four powers war going on to learn the system this year and next! We always have one ready to go just for new players.
Got to hook them somehow!

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Wednesday, April 16, 2014 - 11:59 pm: Edit

Mike, I was already thinking I might try to go next year to play FTF as a real board game. It wouldn't be worth the cost right now when I don't even know how to play yet.

Thanks, Peter. That tells me I am not missing something and you can't try to defend all the bases. I've set them up mostly on the SBs, but with a CVL group, a BC, and a CL in 0803 and a few ships from the Duke's fleet that can react into it to put up a fight at one bats. Then left a full reserve at Duke's to save something and do some more damage.

The more I set this up and really mess with things the more familliar it all is and simple it seems. It's definately easier to learn this if you already know SFB, there is never a feeling of being overwhelmed even though it is a massive game.

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Friday, April 18, 2014 - 02:53 pm: Edit

I know you guys like talking about F&E, so maybe someone could answer a nagging question for me. When I look at the Hydrans and what they can do on turn 3 I can't help but notice that they can destroy all three coalition bases that are within range of their capital. This would probably cost them 3-5 cruisers lost to directed damage.

I've read a lot of the games in the AAR forum and never seen experienced players do this, or even discuss it as an option. So I must be missing something here, because it seems like the best way to delay the attack on Hydrax would be to kill these three bases on turn 3 and then fight tooth and nail to prevent the Klingons from re-building a supply point within range of the capital (the Lyrans will be able to re-build one just by doing it on the same turn as the Klingons, the Hydrans can't kill both).
Why is this not a standard way of defending the Hydrans? Is it because when the Klingons come for the Hydrans they will have enough ships to pin them out of a hex as soon as they arrive so having to build a base will not delay the attack on Hydrax?

By Richard B. Eitzen (Rbeitzen) On Friday, April 18, 2014 - 05:06 pm: Edit

Often the Klingons pile enough ships in 1013 to pin out any attempt to do this.

By Rob Padilla (Zargan) On Friday, April 18, 2014 - 05:50 pm: Edit

Richard is correct. And enough ships at 1013 usually saves 1214 also, combined with the Home Fleet backing them up and the Southern Reserve reserve fleet.

A better tactic is to attack the Lyrans and kill 413 and 212. But this can be an expensive exchange. You have to weigh the losses of cruisers against the 2 BATS. For me personally it's rarely a worthwhile exchange. You are better served loosing your cruisers over a SB or the Capital.

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) On Friday, April 18, 2014 - 06:15 pm: Edit

Yeah, if the Coalition just kind of ignore the fact that the Hydrans are going to attack on T3, the Hydrans can make a big mess of those border bases. But given that the Coalition player *knows* that the Hydrans can attack on T3, and that the Coalition generally want to gang pile on the Hydrans on T4 anyway, the Coalition can move an awful lot of ships down to the Hydran border on Coalition T3.

By Rob Padilla (Zargan) On Friday, April 18, 2014 - 06:44 pm: Edit

It doesn't even have to be a lot of ships, just enough to make it hurt. Heck let the Hydrans in the hex, and with enough EW the Coalition has a good chance of winning Approach round 1, which is all it takes to force all 3 approach rounds.
Loosing 3 to 5 cruisers to bag 3 key BATS isn't a horrible trade. But add to that an extra 3 to 9! Approach rounds and you may loose 10 or more for the same 3 BATS! And that's beyond horrible.

Hello Marc,

The issue I see with hitting those three bases (0413, 1013, 1214) is the way the coalition fleets are set up, and how they will react to your moves.

The Klingon western fleet may or may not be spread out across the border, or maybe it will be more concentrated near 1214. (Hint, if it's concentrated at 1214, consider the expedition to Fed space.) The Southern Reserve fleet will of course be at the S/R starbase, though it will have a reserve there.

The Home fleet, however, can be set up within two hexes of the capital. If they put their fleet in say, 1413, they can then react from there to 1214 to defend the BATS.

This of course won't save the battlestation - you will win the approach battle, then cripple the base, then destroy it (or outright destroy it in one round with your 140+ lines), and the cost will be as you say, about 3-5 cruisers for all three BATS, maybe more if the coalition is lucky.

But then you'll have to leave - the coalition will have far too many ships there. They'll have a chunk of the eastern fleet, a reserve from the S.R. fleet, the entirety of the home fleet, possibly some of turn 3's production, and if they're really sneaky they set up 2-3 of their reserves in the north in 1209 and sent them down south. The Lyrans might pull a similar trick at 0413 using forces off the starbase, but if you tricked them into staying put you can at least catch a break there.

And so you retreat, they hold the position, and at the beginning of turn 4 declare one of their tugs to be acting as a supply point, and
then all the aforementioned ships are in range of hitting your capital on turn 4. The very move to keep them away from your capital could cost you your capital early.

At least, that's what could happen in theory. Often in real life, the gambit could work because of how the Klingons choose to set up their fleets, and how they react based on what they guess you're trying to do.

(Edit: And as I see posted above, the coalition could pin you clear out of 1013 if they chose to send down enough ships on turn 3. But at least you'd know that going in and can choose to do something else.)

Have you tried it before? How did the tactic work for you? The experts on the boards can weigh in on whether my analysis is on the mark or all wet, but really it only matters if your opponent can see your plan before you kill them with it.

Anyway, nice to meet you.

The Lyran BATS are savable too, given enough ships there to pin out and/or make the attack expensive. I've had success fighting mostly defensively against the Kzin (take out easy targets turn 2 then pull back and send a lot south turn 3 ready to invade the Hydrans.) Even if you do kill all three BATS the Coalition can still attack, they'll be in supply for operational move and able to use convoys, tugs and FRDs.

I'd say Kevin is pretty much on the money with his analysis.

It does depend on how experienced the Coalition player is. In one of my early games (this is decades ago, mind you), we were able as the Hydrans to destroy all 3 Lyran battlestations and the Enemy's Blood starbase. I don't think our opponent's realized that the Lyrans
were so weak in the south. Heck, I didn’t realize it until I looked at it.

But after a situation like that, most Lyran players these days will reinforce the south before the Hydrans attack. Also, keep in mind that the Enemy's Blood fleet is released before the Hydrans attack, so the Lyrans have access to that reserve marker and can have 2 reserves on the Hydran front.

With a decent number of reserves for the Klingons and Lyrans, it does become a deterrent for Hydran attack. Again, this is partly dependent on where the Hydrans are on the learning curve. Many (if not most) experienced Hydran players try to preserve their fleet (i.e., their cruisers) for those battles where the Coalition either can't direct too much or where directing is an expensive proposition (capital or starbase). That makes them hesitant to go after a reinforced base even if they can pop it because the attempt may cost them 3-5 cruisers.

In my two most recent games, the Hydrans actually chose not to attack the southern Lyran bases at all on turn 3.

I think for the most part the Hydrans will usually only attack the Klingons if they are going to attempt the expedition. Hydrans don't want to bring the home fleet and Southern Reserve Reserve Fleet in range of their capital (which will happen many times if you attack those Klingons BATS).

Marc, welcome aboard. We all are eager to play against someone new, so forgive us for trying to nudge you into a game! Seriously, it's always good to see a new face around here.

I didn't read everyone's comments fully, but another reason not to attack the Klingons on turn 3 is to prevent the Klingon reserves from moving forward and causing more damage to the Hydrans on turn 4.
It is common for Hydrans NOT to attack at all on turn 3 simply to prevent damage to the Hydrans. Believe it or not, Hydrans are the most dangerous when their pincount is highest, as that means the Coalition is forced to counter the pincount and that relieves pressure on the Feds.

Wow, thanks everyone for such a detailed response to my question. I can see now why in many games killing all 3 BATS would not be possible, and even when it is my original thought that it wouldn't delay the attack on Hydrax anyway is also true. I was just stuck on the concept of defending them that way but knew I had to be missing something since I'd never even heard it discussed as an option before or seen anyone try it in any of the games in the AAR section.

I have made it to the end of Turn 1 in my first solo training game and I am already beginning to understand the "Hydran First" strategy which never made sense too me before. But planning for the future at the end of turn 1 with the Klingons I easily see the merits of not worrying about totally knocking the Kzinti off their homeworld before focusing on the Hydrans. That never made any sense too me until I actually played this first turn, now it makes a lot of sense.

Oh, and hi Ted, I think it's been like 10 or 15 years since we last saw each other:-)

Heh. It's been a few moons. 😊

My typical plan is to hit the Kzin as hard as possible on turn 2. The intent is to destroy all bats, the Count and Duke's SBs (The Lyrans
provide most of the ships for the Duke and Counts), and hit the capital with the 60 ships that can make it. Usually I only send 4 ships to each bats and take 2-3 cripples per unreinforced bats. This usually devastates the homeworld non-capital planets, and leaves the Coalition with a pile of cripples. On Turn 3, I hit very few Kzin targets, trying to send the Kzin back to their capital, and trying to contain the Kzin with a big force adjacent to the capital. I then repair massive amounts of ships with all Klingon bats, the NR SB, several forward deployed FRDs and even some homeworld repairs. This large quantity of ships, including all new production fly down to the Hydran front. Most go the 1013 bats, but I keep enough at 1415 to stop the expedition from outpinning the mobile forces at the SR SB.

I have a strong reserve with stasis and maulers at 1013 and all 4 Klingon reserves down south. The Lyrans leave 2 reserves at 413 and 1 at the EB SB. If the Hydrans go after the Lyrans, the stasis reserve from 1013 (as this is a released fleet) goes to 413 freeing a Lyran reserve to go back to the EB SB. If the Hydrans go to the Klingon front, the Homeworld fleet reacts forward (except the reserves), and the SR and 413 Lyran fleets can unpin Klingon fleets. This leaves the Hydran under considerable pressure, and the front where I am relatively weak is the Kzin. I leave ship parity in that theater, but it is hard for the Kzin to make strong inroads if I have done enough damage to them early.

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Saturday, April 19, 2014 - 04:48 pm: Edit

I have to say that after just one turn I am surprised at how much my SFB knowledge helps to learn F&E. For example, it already seems like there are very few ships and options for build/sub/conversion and I really wish I could later upgrade D6Vs to D6Us. Without knowing SFB I would probably still be overwhelmed by the choices, but being a lifelong SFB junkie it already seems like there are very few options available when it comes to ships. That is the most surprising thing too me, how simple and spartan basic F&E already feels too me after just one turn despite being such a massive game.
I kind of want all the expansions already for turn 2, haha.

By Kevin Howard (Jarawara) on Saturday, April 19, 2014 - 09:45 pm: Edit

Well you see the game was just too massive to put it all into one box. It's be too big to package and too expensive to sell. But don't worry, all those goodies are in the expansions. I think it's Fighter Operations (FO) that has the D6U, so you can build them to your hearts content!

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Wednesday, April 23, 2014 - 03:24 pm: Edit

I have complete Turn 2 and I have learned more about F&E in the last few days than I had in years of just reading about it. The biggest thing I've learned is that the entire game revolves around the Klingons, it's really all up to them. The Hydran First strategy, which never made sense too me before, almost seems like the only way to go for many reasons including the low quality of the Klingon fleet on Turn 3 when you would attack the Kzinti homeworld if you were going to kill them first. It will actually be easier to take them out on turn 6 or 7.

I also never understood how the Kzinti or Hyrdans could do anything but die... until Turn 2 when the Kzinti made the Klingons pay to take down the Duke's SB and then knocked the Coalition off of 2 of the planets they were trying to cap... all without losing a single ship and taking only a few cripples. The Kzinti and Hydran battle lines are just much, much better than these early Klingon ones.

The Klingons desperately need to get D5Vs and D7Vs so they can absorb damage on something other than D5s and F5s.

By Ted Fay (Catwhoeatsphoto) on Wednesday, April 23, 2014 - 03:39 pm: Edit

Well, Lyrans and Roms are important - but yes the Klingons are the big power. The Coalitions greatest strengths come with combined arms and technologies (heavy Lyran ships, Klingon damage
absorption, Romulan fighters, Lyran CV groups).

You're also right about the Alliance not being helpless. While they absolutely do get whalloped for the first 7-12 turns (and they MUST if the Coalition has any hope at ultimate success), they are not helpless because the Coalition can't be everywhere at once. The Alliance can achieve local superiority in a number of locations, particularly after the Feds come on board.

Those Lyran CVL groups are amazing, they were like the first thing I noticed when I got the game. From SFB my impression of the Lyrans was that they barely used carriers... so I was suprised to see that the Lyran CVL group is actually better than a Fed CVS group. Of course, the Feds can sustain their CVS groups on the line for many turns while the Lyrans will only have one or two rounds at most with theirs on the line so the Fed CVS groups are more powerful in practice due to the support they have that the Lyrans don't... SVC really is a genius, this game is amazing.

I am planning on taking this solo learning game two turns into attacking the Feds since the strength with which you are able to attack the Feds is the best judge of how well you've done to that point... and if I stopped before attacking the Feds I would be apprehensive about attacking the Feds in my second game. Then I'll decide if I want to start of and see how I do better, or keep going and get to my beloved Romulans:-)

When FO comes out I'll get the all the expansions, learn all those rules, play a solo training game with the expansions... and then I'll finally be ready to try a real game against someone like you without them having to teach me every little thing as we go.

I normally don't analyze a games rules this early in learning a game as usually once you learn more you realize you were wrong about it but there is one thing I've noticed about F&E I might change.
When captured planets is not garrisoned an RDF is created for the original owner. This makes perfect sense and works well. But when an enemy captures a planet after 2 turns and RDF is not created for them, and I think one should be. That is what the garrisoning ship is doing over those two turns, right, overseeing the establishment of police/controlling forces on the planet at "non-combat rates". I would think an RDF would be created for the capturing player at the instant the planet begins to generate income for them.

It's not a big deal, just the one thing I've noticed so far that I would probably change.

Marc Michalik:

If you were not aware, I wanted to let you know that your monster scenario "The Orb" was the monster reviewed in Captain's Log #46, and you garnered mention as a Romulan Sub Commander who told Deth O'Kay about the technological device.

Really, I'll have to see that some time. It's an honor to have met Deth O'Kay... I just wish I could remember the experience:-)

marc, the reason for that (RDF) is that a captured planet remains a captured planet, the RDF is the resistance that stays after the surrender (and is reborn whenever hope arises)...

As for carriers, while the Fed could build a second carrier per turn the Klingons and Lyrans have to give it a serious think due to funding required for that second squadron of fighters (for the Lyrans, it may be a choice of converting a second group or shipping the cash to the Klingons for them to think about it)
I understand the reason for the RDF, I was just saying that it seems to me that the garrison ship spends two turns "overseeing securing of the planet at non-combat rates" and when it is done with that, no security is actually established. You get income, but it very easy to knock the garrison ship off the planet and re-start the 2 turn clock.

I am mostly thinking about raids, which I don't even have the rules for yet. An RDF for the capturing player wouldn't really provide any defense to overcome if a fleet is sent to re-set the income clock, but it would prevent just a raid from doing that which seems right.

But I don't really know the game yet, so I could just not understand something.

Marc,

One thing you'll find with the expansions is that the dynamic of the game does shift a bit.

The ship advantage of the Coalition is degraded with the expansions. Not only does the Alliance get more ships in actual numbers, but those numbers are amplified since the Alliance is on the defense.

What the Coalition got in exchange was some enhanced capabilities, such as SAFs, battlegroups, Minor Shipyards, colonies, Espionage and Sabotage, penal ships and such. Even though most of those things are available to both sides, the Coalition can use them better since they have the financial advantage.

But you gotta get used to the fact that the Alliance has way more ships than in basic F&E.
Other than a DWV or maybe an escort carrier, I don't think the Lyrans can build a second carrier a turn. Well, an aux but not a real warship.

By **chris upson (Misanthropope)** on Thursday, April 24, 2014 - 03:09 pm:  Edit

between LAVs, tug fighters, and JGP fighters, you're effectively capable of producing two carriers per turn for a fair while. if you're determined to max out carriers you can use overrides (the lyrans have a reasonable number of distinct carrier classes), but IMO not even the lyrans have enough spare income to make that a good idea.

speaking to pete's point, in addition to closer ship parity, there's also military raids which effectively levels the ship count still more. the coalition have a lot of territory to garrison mid-war, and suddenly ether need twice as many ships as in brown paper bag F&E or can expect to lose several ships per turn to marauding DNLs.

By **Pete DiMitri (Petercool)** on Thursday, April 24, 2014 - 08:01 pm:  Edit

This is true - garrisons need to be several ships. I usually use 3. That prevents them from being destroyed by raids in most cases.

In terms of the Lyrans, I'm not sure if it's even going to work well beyond using the free fighter factors, so I'm not sure that they should build the second carrier in a year. The Lyrans have a lot of needs for their money, and paying 2 EPs per factor is quiet costly.

Maybe doing some LAV/SAV stuff, but in my games I only built one before being sucked into the high demands on Lyran money (i.e., the Klingons and many repairs).

I don't build the 2nd starbase as the Lyrans and I know many people do - I frankly find the money tight enough even without that.

I'm not really sure what empire besides the Feds can really afford to
pay for true carrier factors. And even with the Feds it's harder once you get to turn 10 production schedule.

I wasn't saying the Lyrans should try to build 2 CVL groups per turn, just that they were really great carrier groups. With a COMPOT density of 8 they will be very useful to absorb some damage for 1 or 2 rounds depending on how many are present. But the Lyrans will never have the ability to sustain them on the line like the fighter using races can. I just think it is really cool how the Lyran CVLs fit into the Lyran fleet. The Lyrans can use their CVLs the same way most races use CWs, and most other races don't use carriers that way.

Marc, I agree that they are cool.

Lyrans can actually sustain them pretty well, since they can trade fighters with the Klingons. They start with immediate fighter backup, which is very useful.

Marc wrote:

I understand the reason for the RDF, I was just saying that it seems to me that the garrison ship spends two turns "overseeing securing of the planet at non-combat rates" and when it is done with that, no security is actually established.

I'm wondering where the quoted statement above is coming from (it might very well be in the rulebook, but a cursory look didn't spot it). A captured planet requires constant garrisoning, as otherwise, it will immediately revolt (apparently in F+E, everyone is constantly at the edge of rebellion...) and become loyal to the original owners. A garrisoning ship isn't "securing a planet". It is just suppressing the
population at gunpoint. And once it stops pointing guns at the surface (i.e. it leaves), the population is no longer suppressed.

There is no need to change the rules to make it so the conquering player has their job easier (i.e. by not needing to have a single FF garrisoning a planet). As the current system works fine. And there is no compelling reason to change it.

That being said, I'm pretty sure in the advanced rules, there are ways to "long term capture" something, so it just becomes your territory (although I don't know if you can do that to planets or if it just provinces).

Peter B.

You can do it with planets as well.

The garrison checks are at the end of the movement phase and end of the combat phase and suchlike.

Planets are annexed when provinces are, which is different than long term captured.

Long Term Capture is (438.0) [FO]

Annexing provinces is (448.2) [PO]

I bet those rules accomplish what I was thinking, that you deserve some level of "ground security" for the 2 turns you spend establishing the ability to generate income. I just assume that to generate income some level of security on the ground must be
established and that is what is being accomplished during those 2 turns. After those 2 turns, there should be some type of minimal "self holding" ability that doesn't allow something like a raid to re-start the 2-turn clock but also doesn't provide any real defense against an actual fleet.

That's what I meant, but I'm not campaigning for changes or anything. I still just barely understand basic F&E.

Marc,

To do that, you need to commit ground troops. A single ship (say a frigate even) has enough firepower to level a city, which is enough to prevent the populace from rising up again. If it leaves or gets driven away, the few dozen (max) security personnel that a single ship can leave behind are not enough against the millions or billions of individuals on the conquered world.

Marc wrote:

>>After those 2 turns, there should be some type of minimal "self holding" ability that doesn't allow something like a raid to re-start the 2-turn clock but also doesn't provide any real defense against an actual fleet. >>

In the base game, without Raids, this isn't really an issue. You capture a planet and park an FF over the planet to hold it. If someone attacks the FF with some ships and liberates the planet, it is the exact same effect as if there was some sort of "conquering RDF" on the planet. But also has the effect of requiring the attacker to park a ship on the planet (which is an important thing for the attacker to be required to do, in regards to game balance--one of the hidden weaknesses of being the otherwise completely in the driver's seat attackers in this game is that they need to maintain their captured territory, which is costly, in terms of ships used and ships lost).
In the expanded game with Raids, you end up with the same dynamic, but you prevent owing control of the planet or whatever by virtue of using more ships (i.e. instead of a single FF holding a planet that is vulnerable to raids, you have to park 3xFF on/around the planet so that the planet isn't instantly liberated by killing that single FF with a raid). Which is yet another hidden cost for the attackers.

You certainly *could* change this to work differently, but I don't know that doing that would be good for the game.

By Stewart Frazier (Frazikar2) on Monday, April 28, 2014 - 07:45 pm: Edit

Planets can never be annexed, they must be formally transferred but provinces can be annexed...

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, April 28, 2014 - 09:07 pm: Edit

(448.28) Planets in a province are annexed along with that province. Devastated planets would begin the time period to recover from devastation after annexation is complete.

By Richard B. Eitzen (Rbeitzen) on Monday, April 28, 2014 - 09:20 pm: Edit

Planets can indeed be annexed and are when the province they are in is annexed.

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Tuesday, April 29, 2014 - 12:20 am: Edit

Yes, Peter, I see how that could have just been bias on my part. Playing my first game solo with CB to learn the rules I am unavoidably thinking more from the coalition side because they have a lot more to do than the allies this early in the war. From the Kzinti perspective I have knocked coalition ships off of planets every turn since they took them and prevented all but two generating any income in just 2 turns.

Right now I am at C4 with all the coalition ships moved but not the
allied reserves. I am pretty sure 2 Hydран SBs will fall on this turn and Hydrax next turn. Either that or I will see how badly the Hydrans can wreck a fleet over their capital, haha.

Marc wrote:
&gt;&gt;Yes, Peter, I see how that could have just been bias on my part. Playing my first game solo with CB to learn the rules I am unavoidably thinking more from the coalition side because they have a lot more to do than the allies this early in the war. From the Kzinti perspective I have knocked coalition ships off of planets every turn since they took them and prevented all but two generating any income in just 2 turns. &gt;&gt;

Oh, heh, yeah. There is absolutely no need at all for the Coalition to get any sort of help/aid/upgrades/whatever in basic F+E.

In basic, plain, brown F+E, the Coalition have all the momentum, advantage, and ability to do anything most of the time. I don't know that I'd say that the game is *incredibly* tilted towards the Coalition, as the long term victory conditions certainly give some advantage to the Alliance (due to the number of bases and total economies of the Alliance vs the Coalition, so while the game mechanics really tilt in the direction of the Coalition most of the game, the VP Calculation rules give an edge to the Alliance in the long run), but I think the basic game is certainly on some level tilted towards the Coalition. Certainly for the first 15 turns or so, and they can really do a lot of damage in those first 15 turns.

Anything built into the game that seems like a minor Alliance advantage early on (like the difficulty of maintaining planets for the Coalition) is really all the Alliance has to go on for the first half of the game.

All indications are that F+E with all/most of the expansions apparently goes a very long way towards pushing the game balance in the direction of the Alliance:
-Expansion based construction schedules are vastly better for the Alliance than they are in the basic game, while the Coalition construction schedules hardly change at all (for example, the Gorn construction schedule in the expanded game is 50% bigger than the basic F+E construction schedule).

-Many of the expansion rules tend to significantly help the Alliance, in terms of them being able to act and do things in the face of overwhelming Coalition ship superiority that simply aren't available in the basic rules (see: Raids).

-The expansions add plenty of extra help and money and random extra upgrades (The Hydrans get a free DN! The Hydrans get 50EPs in the incredibly likely event that they lose their Capital! The Gorns get to do half cost field repair! The Feds gets even more Free Fighters! etc.) to the Alliance that the Coalition just aren't getting comparable versions of.

To be fair, the Coalition get lots of extra fun stuff too in the expansions (EW, for example, seems to really favor the Coalition), but in general, the expansion rules that help the Coalition tend to just be more instances of them getting to be better at stuff they were already good at (i.e. having ship number superiority and early in the game combat superiority); the expansion rules that help the Alliance give them new capabilities and things to do in the face of what in the basic game is just overwhelming force. And the Expansions tend to go a *long* way towards evening out the incredible ship number disparity in the basic game.

EW goes to the Coalition in the beginning with the expansions, but will even out over time as more scout type units become available. And with the exception of battles over hardpoints actually start to favor the alliance.
The Coalition has the advantage of cooler-looking ships. And colors! Look at what the coalition has, sleek black and bold red! What does the alliance get to counter that? Blue? Green? Various shades of white? The coalition wins on color alone!

Except for the Lyrans. The Lyrans never get anything nice.

The SFG rules and Battle Group rules certainly seem to help the Coalition early on in the game, but again, they are mostly just helping the Coalition do what they were already doing very well anyway--SFG ships let the Coalition really kill Hydran Cruisers (which they were already doing) and absorb damage on war hulls (which they were already doing, but BGs do let them use all those F5s/DWs more efficiently); the Alliance certainly can benefit from BGs too, but mostly not till much later in the game (as it will mostly be the Feds and Gorns using BG forces); the Hydrans and Kzinti are mostly stuffing groups full of CV groups).

I've never used the X-Ship rules in practice, but certainly on paper, they look like a total Alliance gimme--they give them all sorts of extra money late in the war (when they already have a theoretical money advantage due to the exhaustion disparity) and seem like the Feds are going to be all over them more than anyone else.

The Coalition doesn't have an EW advantage in the early war.

When Auxiliary scouts, scout pods, EW for PDUs and early warning networks are taken into account, if anything they are at a disadvantage. They might have an advantage in open space, but those battles are much fewer in number.

The capital systems are terrible for the Coalition in terms of EW. There's almost no way to avoid a 2 shift at Kzintai.
I agree with Pete, except in open space (which is almost always a bad idea for the alliance to pick a fight there) the coalition is constantly looking at pretty good amounts of Free EW in the terms of bases, PDU's and EWN.

The Coalition can either sacrifice decent compot to try and get EW parity or they can shoot into a shift at the important places the Alliance will fight at.

The reason folks get the mistaken belief that the Coalition has an EW advantage is they look at the ships on each side and see Klingon D6S D5S and the Lyran CWS and DWS.. all admittedly very good scout ships. But without those good and numerous scout hulls the Coalition would be constantly and horribly EW shifted everywhere important (or almost everywhere at least).

I admit as a mostly Alliance player I look at the D6S and the DWS with envious eyes.. but I don't really need them.. the Coalition really does need them.

When talking about how F&E favors this side over that side, it's important to look at what F&E is supposed to do: Model the history of the General war. So it will certainly be aiming (with and without the expansions) to lean towards a certain path of win/loss. Historically, the Klinks and Lyrans whupped the Hydrans into the stone age and very nearly did it to the Kzinti. Then they started on the Feds. By the time the Gorn come into it, The Coalition is losing. F&E models that fairly easily but almost to the the point where it's hard to stray off the path.

Dunno. The EW advantage over Kzintai is short lived. Once the PDUs go down and I'm just fighting the fleet I can and do 2-shift the *Kzinti* when I'm playing Coalition. Of course, that also depends on how hard the Alliance targets my scouts.
It works out.

By Mike Parker (Protagoras) on Wednesday, April 30, 2014 - 04:38 pm: Edit

I agree Ted I don't think EW is broken.. I think its just about right. Unfortunately i think many folks believe the Coalition wins the early EW war because their scouts are better and more numerous.

I agree with Pete, yeah the coalition has more and better scouts early but they need them to fight off the inherent EW the Alliance has in bases and PDU's. Sure once all the bases and PDU's are dead your fighting in open space really... and that is where the coalition EW can really start shifting the Alliance but as I believe in 99% of situations the Alliance shouldn't be fighting there.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Wednesday, April 30, 2014 - 05:33 pm: Edit

The EW situation was seen as untenable for the Alliance more than a decade back. At that point, once historical introduction dates for scouts got enforced (there was a period where they weren't really, in the pre-SIT days), and once you added the extra EW rules, the Coalition dominated the EW war.

That was when the PDU EW, Auxiliary scouts, and scout pods were introduced. The EWN came later. Was it overkill? Maybe, maybe not.

I'm not necessarily saying EW is broken, merely that with the expansions, the reality, as Mike has said, is that the Coalition doesn't have an EW advantage.

The real question is does it all balance out.

My sense, after running to Coalition now a bit, is that with all the extra ships and EW that the Alliance got, plus the EW platforms, the Coalition doesn't have the option to do as quick a kill. Conversely, all of the economic development rules are things that the Coalition can use to really offset the effects of exhaustion, so the Coalition
does have more "legs" than they do without the expansions.

I'd say that with the expansions, the game gets pushed further into the mid-range, which is probably a good thing. The only bad thing is if a Coalition player goes in expecting to achieve overwhelming results by turn 8. It's not really doable unless the Alliance makes some major mistakes.

Personally, I want the Klingons to kinda need the Roms. Otherwise, what's the point? At this point I would say that they do.

Pete wrote:
>>The EW situation was seen as untenable for the Alliance more than a decade back. At that point, once historical introduction dates for scouts got enforced (there was a period where they weren't really, in the pre-SIT days), and once you added the extra EW rules, the Coalition dominated the EW war.

That was when the PDU EW, Auxiliary scouts, and scout pods were introduced. The EWN came later. Was it overkill? Maybe, maybe not.>>

Yeah, see, to be fair, the only time I played a GW game with full EW rules was in the mid 90's, using the original EW rules. Where the Coalition had all the good scouts, the Kzinti/Hydrans didn't have any good scouts at all (and no free Aux/PGS/whatever scouts and scads of Kzinti Drone Scouts) and PDUs didn't provide EW, and the end result of that was the Kzinti firing into a -2 shift over their Homeworld constantly.

With the updates from a decade after that (PDU EW, Aux scouts, scout pods, etc.), it seems like a vastly better situation for the Alliance, but still, the Coalition being able to field Battlegroups full of 2 point scouts and pack the line with D6Ds and whatever, it seems like the Kzinti and Hydrans are certainly going to have EW troubles in a lot of situations everywhere but in their Capitals.
But then, if the general consensus is that EW isn't actually that bad for the Alliance, that further supports my understanding that the fully expanded game is a lot closer to balanced, if not favoring the Alliance, than the basic game is.

Kevin's post mentioning colors made me think of this. I've been moving for the last 2 days, still one day to go. But yesterday I opened a box from deep in the game section in my closet and found something I forgot I even had... about 500 flawed and misprinted SFB countersheets.

I've got pink Romulans, Grey Klingons, Hydrans ships that a Hydran green silhouettes on Lyran yellow backgrounds, you name a possible mistake and it is probably in there. I completely forgot I had these, it is really cool to see them again. I'm sure I will play SFB again someday, I may have to pull out the grey Nazi looking Klingon counters when I do:-)

Oy!
Waffen Imperial Klingons, like the the initial onslaught wasn't enough. Geesh!
Could be cool for custom civil war scenarios or just units that survived multiple fleet engagements as experience/badge markers.

Heh! Cool...

The grey Klingons are the coolest ones, even though the silhouettes are still white instead of black. The pink Romulans are good for insulting Romulan players, haha. Most aren't as cool, though, some of them are normal but just have red lines through them. The ones where the colors got mixed wrong (or whatever happened) are generally the cool ones.
I am finally done with 3 days of moving a cleaning and can get back to my solo/training F&E game. I am on C4 with all moves and reserve moves made and I am thinking of withdrawing before combat against the Hyrdan SB the Klingons went to because they sent both reserves there. When the Kzinti did that, I regretted taking down the base because the next turn so many ships would have been within range of their capital that they couldn't have defended the SB nearly as well. Same situation now with the Hydrans, so I might pull out of the Klingon SB fight and kill it next turn when it wont have nearly as many defenders.

By Kevin Howard (Jaráwara) on Friday, May 02, 2014 - 09:58 am: Edit

Best way to kill a starbase is to threaten something more important and then fry the starbase while the ships are off defending that other location.

I gamed against a guy who didn't understand that concept, and was convinced that he *had* to take down the Duke's Fleet starbase on a certain timeline. He sent in 53 ships to do the job. I sent both reserves, bringing my total to 35, and expected him to back off. He didn't.

When the dust was settled, he had lost 47 of the 53 ships, including several carriers. I hadn't lost a single ship. He claimed victory, because the starbase also died.

By Mike Parker (Protagoras) on Friday, May 02, 2014 - 11:29 am: Edit

Definition of Pyrrhic Victory.

Same concept as often the threat of doing something is more valuable than actually doing it. I find the early D7A SFG ships are almost always better as a threat than used in battle!

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Friday, May 02, 2014 - 12:03 pm: Edit

>>When the Kzinti did that, I regretted taking down the base because the next turn so many ships would have been within range
of their capital that they couldn't have defended the SB nearly as well. Same situation now with the Hydrans, so I might pull out of the Klingon SB fight and kill it next turn when it won't have nearly as many defenders.>>

Yeah, that is something that it is important to figure out very early in the game--you don't *need* to kill SBs most of the time, and usually eventually the SBs will be poorly defended (as you are also seriously threatening a Capital) and you can kill them for minimal losses.

It is exceedingly rare that you need to kill a SB that is heavily defended, and doing so will often cost way more than it is worth. Late in the game (wayyyyyy late), it is often worth going through a lengthy SIDS siege just to kill a SB for VPs. Most of the time, however, heavily defended SBs are best just worked around.

especially in the first ten turns when the ship count disparity is big, starbases are nearly a net force *divider* for the alliance. in the early part of the war i try not to attack a non-capital starbase unless i can put the defending fleet into an awkward or vulnerable position. that's not really practicable for the duke's or expeditionary starbases, but it is very much a possibility with the fed starbases.

Yep, to wit: in the game I'm currently playing with Richard, the Feds have been heavily defending the 4th Fleet (Kzinti border) and 7th Fleet (Gorn Border) SBs (i.e. there are always very significant fleets sitting on them during the Coalition turn). The Feds just lost *two* of the SBs adjacent to the Capital for, like, nothing to the Klingons on T12, as they just couldn't defend them--one was killed by an attacking fleet after all possible ships and reserves that could have defended it were pinned, and then the Klingons still had a dozen cruisers left to go and flatten the completely undefended SB. The other was killed by the whole Klingon fleet retreating on top of it out of the Fed Capital. It too was completely undefended (the Feds
could have retreated to it as well, but they would have been forced
to fight a round of fighting retreat, although it only now just occurs
to me that I probably could have retreated onto the base, declined
the BIR10 vs BIR1 approach battle, and then just fought normally
over the SB. Crap).

So the Feds have been keeping two important SBs alive with heavy
defense, but have so far lost 5 SBs (Klingon border, Tholian border,
Romulan border, 2 adjacent to the Capital), all of which fell for
minimal damage to the Klingons, as they were all attacked when
they couldn't be defended by much. I suspect that the Gorns will
suffer a similar fate for at least one of their SBs this turn as well.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Saturday, May 03, 2014 - 12:30 pm: Edit

Peter, if a fighting retreat is over a base then declining the approach
battle does not remove the condition of a single round at BIR 10 vs
BIR 0 of the fighting retreat itself. There was a ruling by FEAR on it.

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Saturday, May 03, 2014 - 01:06 pm: Edit

Ah, ok, that makes me feel better then :-) 

So if you fighting retreat onto a Star Base and then decline the
approach, you still have to fight a BIR10 vs BIR1 first round with
the SB, correct?

Well, I still probably would have lost the SB, but at least I could
have done some damage back. Oh well.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Saturday, May 03, 2014 - 01:41 pm: Edit

Correct. The fighting retreat BIRs are a consequence of poor
decision making or bad luck and so must be accepted at some point.

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Saturday, May 03, 2014 - 02:07 pm: Edit

Wow. Confirmation from like 6 people that my instinct on that was
right. The SFU community is great:-)
I did this on Turn 2 when I had this plan to take down the Counts and Dukes SBs. When I sent both Kzinti reserves to the Dukes SB I didn't even consider backing out of that fight and something like 25 or 30 Klingon ships were crippled. Then the next turn I realized the Kzinti would have had nothing or almost nothing over that base on Turn 3 and there was no need I could see to destroy it on turn 2.

So now I am in the same situation with the eastern Hydran SB and I am going to do it the other way this time, I'll withdraw before combat with the Klingons and kill that SB cheaply later, but the Lyrans will spend 2 command points and take out the Hydran SB on their side where no reserves went and the defending fleet is light on fighters with DGs instead of RNs.

Thatnks for letting me know I am thinking along the right lines.

Yeah, those Hydran and Kzinti SBs? At this point in the game, they pose exactly zero threat to the Coalition--the Coalition have enough ships at this time (i.e. pre-T7) that they can completely demolish and then capture the Capital of one of those empires and then suppress and pin anything that the other empire tries to do. As such, those forward SBs don't really threaten you at all, even if they let some fleets hang out and look threatening.

Once the Coalition picks a target (i.e. Kzinti or Hydran Capital) and moves on it, the target needs to put most of their ships in the Capital to make the most of that particular combat opportunity (i.e. have a lot of ships in the Capital so that they can do a lot of damage to make the Coalition pay for taking it). As a result, there will *always* be a point in time when the Coalition has 100+ ships in range of the Alliance Capital, and the Alliance will end up putting most of their ships there to defend it, and then there will be a SB that is defended by, like, 5 ships or something, and you can kill it for a song.

The SBs sitting there does nothing to the Coalition. It doesn't
measurably block supply if you use FFs to keep supply and retrograde paths open. The ships stationed there don't pose a significant threat to anything of the Coalition's, assuming that they are paying attention. The Kzinti will inevitably end up with most of their ships on the protected Marquis SB anyway, and by the time you can attack that one, it isn't likely worth the effort to kill it (as you probably want to be attacking the Feds at that point).

just to be clear, when you do a fighting retreat onto your own base, you are fighting an approach battle. The ships that are fleeing are being intercepted on their way to the base. That is where you have the 10/0 BIR.

It's basically the only case where you have to fight the approach battle as the defender.

Wait, defender gets to choose valid retreat destination even when choosing second retreat option AFTER attacker declares retreat. Feds could have chose the adjacent SB that the Co was obviously headed for when skidattling from their capital assault. It wouldn't have been a fighting retreat for the Feds as they would get there first. Right?

Andrew,

That's right. Since the defender got there first, it wouldn't be a fighting retreat.

So, as a concrete example of the fighting retreat ruling:

Coalition Turn 1. Lyrans have a lot of ships in 0803. Kzintis have pinned a lot of Lyran ships in 0903. The Kzinti forces in both hexes would be more than the Lyran forces in 0803. However, the Kzintis have an equidistant supply point in 0902. So to ignore priority 4,
they invoke fighting retreat.

There is an approach battle fought in 0803 as Lyran forces that are already in that hex intercept Kzinti forces that have retreated into that hex before they actually get to the base. This is fought at the 10/0 BIR of fighting retreat. Further combat rounds are fought normally (i.e., the Kzinti forces don't need to do another fighting retreat, which they would normally have to do if this wasn't a friendly base).

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Sunday, May 04, 2014 - 08:14 am: Edit

Andrew wrote:
>>Wait, defender gets to choose valid retreat destination even when choosing second retreat option AFTER attacker declares retreat. Feds could have chose the adjacent SB that the Co was obviously headed for when skidattling from their capital assault. It wouldn't have been a fighting retreat for the Feds as they would get there first. Right?>>

Unless the Starbase in question has a Klingon ship sitting on it, and the other Starbase adjacent to the Fed capital does not have a Klingon ship sitting on it. Because they had the choice of two adjacent SBs to retreat to, one having an enemy unit on it and the other not having an enemy unit on it, retreating to the SB in question gets to be a fighting retreat. Yaa.

By Ted Fay (Catwhoeatsphoto) on Monday, May 05, 2014 - 11:31 am: Edit

All this being said, it is worth putting relatively weak fleets on all Alliance SBs, just to extract a pound of flesh before leaving.

Also, forward deployed Alliance fleets (even if not that strong) can force the Coalition to rear-deploy ships, which can take a bit of pressure off a capital.

The bottom line is that *at least* one Alliance capital is very likely to go down by turn 7-8. However, the Alliance can make that process more or less painful.
Agreed. A SB should **never** ever be 100% undefended. Even if you just stick a few FFs on it, it's better than nothing.

Heh. Never say never. 😊

Well Ted in my experience, if the defense of the Homeworlds swings on the presence of a few lowly FFs, then it may be that the Defense planning was not all that hot to begin with.

No Alliance empire should ever be "fighting to the death" like that when a hand-full of FFs can be a factor. It's all about preserving the fleet to be able to come back and bring the fight to the Coalition.

Granted the Feds have it a bit tougher than the Kzinti and Hydrans when it comes to SB defense, as they just have so many of them. But a few well placed reserves can make all the difference too if you have some you just can't cover by placing defensive fleets on or near them. The Feds can usually cover the core SBs by placing one or two reserves far enough back to make pinning them undesirable or impossible.

Sure, I'd say that's the rule. But I've run into rare exceptions, such as when I know I can pin the only fleets in range so that it never will reach said SB. Then I don't need to defend it (well, you can say it was defended by a remote fleet - but you know what I mean).
Mostly I was just being purely argumentative by pointing out that "never" is almost always "never" correct. 😊

By Rob Padilla (Zargan) on Monday, May 05, 2014 - 03:04 pm: Edit

OK, well how about it is "highly inadvisable" to not defend Starbases whenever possible?

By Ted Fay (Catwhoeatsphoto) on Monday, May 05, 2014 - 03:27 pm: Edit

Holy confusing double negative Batman!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQVfOguNWBw

Yes, with rare exception the Alliance should put at least a token fleet on every threatened starbase.

Better. 😊

By Rob Padilla (Zargan) on Monday, May 05, 2014 - 03:46 pm: Edit

I've worked for the government for far too long, I didn't even realize it WAS a double!

It's bad, but we have so many requirements written exactly like that I don't even notice it anymore!

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Monday, May 05, 2014 - 08:42 pm: Edit

Rob wrote:

>>Agreed. A SB should never ever be 100% undefended. Even if you just stick a few FFs on it, it's better than nothing.>>

Yeah, I don't know that that is necessarily true.

A few FFs on a SB often isn't going to accomplish anything other than get a few FFs killed against a determined Coalition fleet--they show up with a 100+ point battle line, you put up 3 or 4 FFs in front of a SB. Why would they not just direct an FF per round and absorb
the extra damage on fighters anyway?

And in instances where the Coalition has ship superiority, putting a handful of FFs on a SB rather than in the same hex as a reserve that can be pinned, just means it is that much easier to pin the reserve, allowing them to have that many extra cruisers to meet your handful of FFs.

I mean, yeah, most of the time, defending a SB is something you really want to do. But some of the time, it isn't really going to help.

A few FFs lets you select your own BIR, meaning that you actually have a chance to hurt something other than his fighters. Undefended SBs can (often) be taken down for absolutely no losses at all by an attacker with a reasonable number of fighter factors.

But losing a few frigates just to score a few cripples is not a good exchange.

If you can't leave a proper battleline, leave a police ship and keep your reserves mobile. Just the threat of a reserve or two showing up will force them to overcommit, which is a form of damage (slowing down their offensive).

And the enemy ships that overcommit against an undefended starbase are that many less ships in the other battles, which might mean more damage to them (depending on whether they think it important to win those other battles this turn and not just wait till next turn).

Do bear in mind that a Fed SB with say 4 defending FFs has a Compot of 68. And no one is saying the FFs would fight to the death, that would be silly. But at least you get to fight a round
(loose a FF yes) and if the dice go in your favor after having a FF vaporized for 16 damage you may only have 4 or 5 SIDS on the SB itself taking it to round 2.

So sure loosing maybe 2 FFs to nail 4 to 6 cripples or two dead ships depending on defender damage is a whole heck of a lot better than watching the attacking fleet take 18 fighters each round for virtually no damage.

Heck if you insist on a full battle line it can still be a garbage fleet of POLs and FFs with maybe the odd CL in there and you'll actually break 100 Compot.

I will admit that there can and will be times where it will not be possible to defend them all. All I am saying is that it's always worth the effort to try and do so whenever possible.

line of trash for 100 compot is a better option than saccing the SB, but putting a handful of frigates at the SB is probably worse. a full line, however bad the ships, is pretty resistant to having its retreat priorities gamed, where the handful of frigates is pretty likely to wind up retreating directly away from the nearest safe harbor.

>>I will admit that there can and will be times where it will not be possible to defend them all. All I am saying is that it's always worth the effort to try and do so whenever possible.>>

Oh, sure. I mean, it would be *nice* to defend all the SBs, but certainly for the Feds, that is a pretty tall order. Like, in my current game, the Kzinti never lost a SB without a reasonably good fight. The Hydrans lost all their SBs with at least some defenders (I think 2 of them went down with a reasonable defending fleet; one of them died defended by half a dozen trash ships defending it and was taken out by a dozen or so trash ships). The Feds, however, just have too many things to defend and just not enough ships to
defend them with. The 3rd and 6th Fleet SBs went down with defending fleets (although severely out matched defending fleets); the 7th Fleet SB was hit brutally as soon as the Klingons attacked. It just had most of the weak 7th fleet on it.

But those SBs adjacent to the Capital? Those are very difficult to defend. As the Coalition can arrange to retreat onto them from the Capital (so they can pin your Capital fleet, fight, and then retreat onto a SB to kill it). The Feds, due to there being three SBs around the Capital, can be put in a very disadvantageous position trying to also retreat (i.e. leave one of 3 unattacked, leave the other two with a couple ships on them. If the Feds go to the SB with ships instead of the empty one, it is a fighting retreat. And then the Klingons retreat on top...).

If the Coalition is over-running one of those Fed adjacent to capital SB's why aren't the feds reactign out a CR10 ship and some FF's to pin coalition forces there? Once you do it enough (only one CR10 needs to go on the first reaction) you end up with a nice defensive fleet that will cause some damage even if he retreats onto the SB from the capital. And if you also retreat the first round is a Fighting Retreat approach battle where you throw up a DN (form) 18xFighters and a gaggle of FF's. You will lose some of the FF's but that is likely worth either saving the SB or extracting your pound of flesh at the SB itself.

If they aren't over-running the SB then it won't be a Fighting Retreat when the Feds retreat and its even better.

I could easily be missing a coalion tactic though

The tactic used was to pin everything sitting in the capital first, so that this was not an option.
Mike wrote:
>>If they aren't over-running the SB then it won't be a Fighting Retreat when the Feds retreat and its even better. >>

The Klingons first pinned all the ships in the Fed Capital (including some reserves). The Klingons then had a couple ships on SB 2808, a dozen ships on SB 3008 (as that was all that was left over after pinning all the Feds in the Capital), and then zero ships on SB 2907. They fought SB 3008 first and kill it, and then retreat to 2909 (where there is a Fed FF and a pinning E4). They then fight in the Capital for a few rounds and retreat. They are tracing supply from captured planet 2610. Retreating on to either 2909 or 2808 are identical retreats (both are closest to supply, both have enemy units, neither is a fighting retreat for the Klingons). They retreat onto SB 2808. If the Feds choose to retreat to SB 2808, it is a fighting retreat, as there are a couple Klingons on SB 2808, and no Klingons on SB 2907, so going to SB 2808 is a fighting retreat, which incurs a huge penalty due to the large number of Klingons sitting there.

I could have avoided all of this by not having an FF in hex 2909, but didn't see what it was actually going to do until it was too late.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Wednesday, May 07, 2014 - 08:17 am: Edit

I had that situation appear in Klingon space when the Kzintis attacked a Lyran BATS being converted to a SB at 1407, with a single FF in 1507 being pinned by the Klingon BATS fighters there. The Kzintis currently hold the Neutral Zone planet in 1506. There was an open space pin battle in 1406 as well. The Klingon/Lyrans got target fixated on killing a DN they crippled in the battle involving the Lyran BATS. This eliminated them retreating to try and save the Klingon BATS. So I traded a Kzinti DN and CVS group for a 2 BATS and 28 wasted Lyran EPs.

The Kzintis still have 10 or CVS groups and a CVA group as we are nearing the end of the alliance half of turn 10.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Wednesday, May 07, 2014 - 08:45 am: Edit
Obviously the big problem is the lack of damage absorption (i.e., attrition units) for the Gorns. But there are some ways to deal with this:

1 - One advantage that the Alliance has is that the 3 main races are connected. At this point in the war, the Kzintis probably have more CVS groups than they need. Send an expeditionary fleet from there. Even better, send some CVS groups to be homeless and now they will provide fighter replacements for Gorn CV groups.

2 - Feds can also send some of their groups. The best "homeless" carriers to bulk up the Gorn fight backup in the basic game is probably the carrier pods. Make them homeless (not as easy because the grids are connected). If homeless isn't doable, the Feds can support 2 expeditionary fleets into gorn space.

Presto, within a turn you can probably get 3-6 carriers into Gorn space. The Gorns already have the heavy hulls, you add some drone bombardment through expeditionary fleets and now the Gorns are balanced and ready to fight.

Yeah, that is clearly what needs to happen (i.e. send carriers to the Gorns)--as of press time (i.e. the end of AT12), it isn't super practical at this point, but in the next few turns, that will certainly be a goal.

Okay makes sense now. I haven't played the basic only rules since the late 80's but I know the coalition has alot more pin advantage in the basic rules. With all the PDU's and SB's and more alliance ships its pretty hard to pin the fed capital in the expanded game.

Its also unfortunate he was in a position to come at you without hitting a hex where you could react onto the SB. But with pin power
comes flexibility for sure, sounds like you just got mugged by a biker gang in F&E terms!

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Wednesday, May 07, 2014 - 10:19 am: Edit

Yep, pretty much.

I mean, like, it isn't *easy* to pin the ships in the Fed Capital--between the fleet and the reserves and all the PDUs, it took something like 160 SEQs of Klingons to do it. And after they did it, they only, had, like, a dozen ships left to attack other targets with. But if that dozen ships are all cruisers and the other targets are an undefended SB, that's what happens.

The ship disparity early in the game in basic F+E? *Really* significant.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Wednesday, May 07, 2014 - 11:22 am: Edit

The same thing does kinda happen to the Lyrans, because they really are pathetic without the Klingons providing those fighter groups. But the Lyrans have the larger economy for repairs and ships builds, and they also get the fighter exchange so that when they finally start building their groups they have instant backups.

The Gorns are basically weaker Lyrans.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Wednesday, May 07, 2014 - 11:24 am: Edit

And yes, the ship disparity in Basic is way more pronounced. A lot of the stuff that Richard is doing to you (kudos to him on this one BTW) is more more difficult once you add in all those expansion ships.

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Wednesday, May 07, 2014 - 01:14 pm: Edit

Yep. Richard is doing a fantastic job of totally tooling me. But on the upside, it's still a fun game, so, well, what are you gonna do?
Looking over the expanded rules, the Alliance is in *such* a better situation with the expansions--a lot more ships, a lot more fighters, better production, whatever. Clearly, if I want a better game as the Alliance, I should be using the expansions. But I'm stubborn and I keep believing that the basic game should be workable and balanced :-) 

I mean, it still might be, and I'm just getting totally outplayed by my opponent. But still, a lot of things still seem a tad wonky. And currently, I'm noticing the Gorns...

I agree with you that the basic game should be balanced and that issue is completely separate from you being stubborn!

That said, and I know you've been an adherent to basic F&E for a long time, you may actually enjoy playing with the expansions, if only for a different feel.

In fairness to you and Richard, it might be too early to tell if you are being outplayed. It certainly looks like the Coalition may be winning, but economic exhaustion will work in your favor, as will the Third Way, assuming you last that long. And I do think that once you give the Gorns some carrier/drone support they will be much more viable and present a legitimate front to the Roms.

I think you have identified a weakness that should be addressed, and my suggestion is what I've already mentioned - that Gorn field repair should be in the basic game.

Oh, heh, yeah, I've certainly used some expansions--the 4PW games Richard and I played recently used all the Tac Ops and Fighter Ops rules; I've played a few chunks of Grand Campaign (up till T7 or so) where we used the same rule sets (but again, this was before they fixed the EW and SFG rules); I've played a few games with various random expansion rules thrown in to try them out.
I'm not fundamentally opposed to the expansions in any way, I just generally find that the game is vast enough without all the extra rules tacked on to worry about, and that the basic game has enough strategic depth on its own that I generally err on the side of just using the basic stuff.

In terms of the current game, it certainly is too early to know the Coalition is certainly winning. Richard is doing a great job with the Coalition, and most of playing the Alliance for the first dozen turns or so is just "Well, that turn wasn't *that* much of an unmitigated disaster, I guess...", so it is hard to tell. But, ya know, it is only T12! We play on!

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Saturday, May 10, 2014 - 03:29 pm: Edit

So, I've made it to turn C5 and finally run into something I can't figure out. I have about 200 SEQs of Klingon and Lyran ships within range of the Hydran capital at the beginning of the turn, the Hydrans have about 80 SEQs in their capital hex. I was planning on taking the Hydran capital on this turn, but when I start working it out I don't see how.

Unless I am getting this wrong, Hydrax will have about 300 compot with 16 PDUs, an SB and the fleet. This will do 70-80 damage per round, essentially crippling the entire battle line every round. If I were to put up a D5V group they could easily direct kill the entire group, so I assume you don't use carriers over homeworlds in the early rounds while the PDUs are still up. With this, killing 3 or 4 PDUs per round, I thought I could barely take Hydrax while taking massive damage to the fleet... then I realized that this will take twice as many rounds as I originally thought.

If I direct 3 or 4 PDUs that will use up all my damage while leaving 18-24 involuntary minus points for the homeless fighters of the PDUs. So the next round, I wouldn't get to kill any PDus, just drop damage to eat up the minus points from the previous round. Is this right? You can generally only direct PDUs every other round because of the minus points the fighters generate? If I have this...
right I am confused, because I don't see how to take a capital planet without crippling or killing almost the entire combined Klingon and Lyran navies.

I must be getting something wrong about this...

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Saturday, May 10, 2014 - 03:39 pm: Edit

No your not getting it wrong. One thing to consider is that you don't have to direct on 3 or 4 PDUs per turn. You can direct on 1 or 2 instead. Forcing the Hydran player to take the remaining points on those fighters. Attrition units do not become involuntary minus points if they can be transferred or given up as legitimate casualties in resolving the damage from a given battle round. While it doesn't reduce the defending compot as much, it does reduce it without forcing you to fight a battle round in which you will score virtually 0 damage points after resolving the involuntary minus points.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Saturday, May 10, 2014 - 03:45 pm: Edit

Marc,

You aren't getting anything wrong. In most games I've seen the Hydran Capital doesn't fall on turn 5.

Mostly the attack is done in stages to spread out the pain.

Stage 1 - Devastate the outlying systems.
Stage 2 - Kill all the PDUs on Hydrax.
Stage 3 - Fight at the Capital Starbase.

So, it can often take 3 turns to do the job. Some players compress it into 2 of course.

By spreading it out, you allow the Coalition to repair some of the damage taken, and also bring more maulers in.

You are right that the battles over Hydrax are brutal. That's why you need lots of maulers. You can usually kill at least 2-4 PDUs a
round with them. Once they are gone, the Coalition will often leave and come back the next turn for the Starbase battle. Remember that as the PDUs are being killed, the Hyran ComPot will be going down as well.

Marc wrote:
>>Unless I am getting this wrong, Hydrax will have about 300 compot with 16 PDUs, an SB and the fleet.>>

Yep. Which is why you want to get the Hydrans before they get 16xPDU on their Capital.

In any case, yeah, you show up with 200+ ships. Use 2 command points and drone bombardment over the Capital. Use a mauler to kill 3xPDU for 20 damage, and the rest probably soaks a good chunk of the negative points from the dead fighters. If they direct the mauler, you probably end up only crippling most of the line. If they don't direct the mauler, you cripple a few more ships (likely including the mauler), but you save a mauler. Lather, rinse, repeat. Assuming you can manage, like, 30 damage, you are only -8 on the next round, so you can probably kill 2 more PDUs on the second round, and so on. After you kill the last PDU, you flee the system, letting the minus points evaporate. Fix most of your ships and come back and kill the SB next turn.

That is the basic plan. That isn't always what happens, but is the basic way to do things.

Wow, OK. It's a lot harder to take a capital planet than I thought. Now I understand why both the Hydran and Kzinti capitals don't always fall. I am trying to do both before attacking the Federation, but now it seems like that might not be possible. I was wanting to attack the Feds on turn 8 or 9, but I doubt I can take both capitals and attack the feds by turn 9. I guess I'll see how it goes, that's why I am doing this.
Marc,

As a practical matter, it's very tough to take both capitals before attacking the Federation. The cost of taking them is very high. It's not impossible, but it's not easy.

That's why it's considered a decisive victory for The Tempest scenario.

Oh, yeah. You can't realistically take both Capitals and then also attack the Feds on T7. If you do that, you are already decisively winning (well, unless you are decisively losing. And attack the Feds anyway).

Generally speaking, the Coalition tends to either take 1 capital (either Kzinti or Hydran; most people tend to support killing the Hydrans over the Kzinti for various reasons, most of which are sound) and then attack the Feds on T7, *or* they plan on taking both capitals and then attacking the Feds on T10 (i.e. before they can attack first).

I'm definitely of the "get the Hydrans" school, and I'm yet to be convinced that it is actually advantageous to let the Feds produce and maneuver ships unmolested for 3 turns before you attack them, but some folks are very fond of that.

I'm glad I asked about this. I am coming up with a whole new plan for the coalition around the fact that the Kzinti homeworld isn't ever going to fall, but I can attack the federation earlier than I was originally planning. I don't see how the Kzinti can keep the Marquis SB alive on turn 7 if I am willing to take damage to kill it, they have about 30 SEQ on it and can't really afford to send more. It seems very important to kill that SB on turn 7 before the Feds can move
on to it. If the Kzinti are going to be alive I have to prevent the feds from sending them money.

I really worry about what the Kzinti are going to do too me once they get a CVA, but I'll see how things work out. It seems like this will all unravel sometime around turn 15 or 20 and the Fed/Kzinti fleets will overwhelm the coalition. The Kzinti are going to become very powerful by then and they are right on the Klingons front door. This is all very interesting to see how things work out.

By *Stewart Frazier (Frazikar2)* on Saturday, May 10, 2014 - 09:32 pm: Edit

One thing I find useful is to determine just how much of your attacking force you're willing to lose to obtain your objective (crippling/destroying a SB, striping PDUs, etc) first, then stay until whichever one happens first. This allows for a bad early beginning to even out or for your opponent to withdraw/retreat before you reach your own retreat level.

And then there are 'bet the fleet' actions where you're not retreating until the attacking fleet is pretty much destroyed. This option should not be selected lightly.

By *Andrew Bruno (Admeeril)* on Sunday, May 11, 2014 - 06:40 am: Edit

Marc-
...Welcome to the fun of Fed & Emp.
;^)

By *Pete DiMitri (Petercool)* on Sunday, May 11, 2014 - 07:47 am: Edit

Marc,

One thing to remember is that the Romulans are on the other side, and if they are doing their job right, the Federation won't necessarily be able to send as many ships to the west as they would like.
Also, you should get your first B-10 not too long after the Kzinti CVA... you are building the B-10 right?

Marc wrote:
>>I don't see how the Kzinti can keep the Marquis SB alive on turn 7 if I am willing to take damage to kill it, they have about 30 SEQ on it and can't really afford to send more.>>

If the Kzinti have close to 20xPDU and a SB over their Capital on T6, they can probably afford to to put over half their ships on the Marquis SB at the end of T6. If the Kzinti have, like, 90 ships (which isn't at all out of the realm of reason at this point), put 50 on the Marquis SB. I mean, like, I haven't been paying that close attention, and it is possible that the Kzinti Capital already lost most of the PDUs, in which case, well, yeah, things are tough. But if they still have their Capital, and the Hydrans still have their Capital, and the Coalition are still about to attack the Feds, the Alliance isn't doing that badly anyway.

If the Coalition then abruptly switch to sending all their ship to the Kzinti Capital on T7 instead of putting most of those ships in Fed space, they still aren't likely to take the Kzinti Capital away on T7, and that is a whole lot of ships that aren't attacking the Feds.

Marc also wrote:
>>I really worry about what the Kzinti are going to do too me once they get a CVA, but I'll see how things work out.>>

The Kzinti CVAs aren't actually all that scary. I mean, they are solid, and certainly worth building, but their main advantage is:

A) Getting two heavy hulls in a line without them being particularly vulnerable.

B) Allowing you to get 3x fighter squads in a line (2 off the CVA
group in the line, and then 1 as an IFF fed forward from off the line) against those insane 120+ Coalition battle lines made of nothing but Lyran BCs and maulers, and you can avoid getting a whole Kzinti CV group crippled and then killed in pursuit.

The Klingons get CVAs only a year later, so they catch up quickly.

Fed CVAs are the really good ones. But the Feds start building them from the get go. In basic F+E, they are really expensive and hard to build (as are all CVAs), but the option for annualized fighter factors (i.e. you get 12 free fighters in the spring and none in the fall, rather than 6 each season) is there, and if you use them, CVAs are vastly more affordable for the Alliance. Which is something they need.

IF playing with 2KX or 2K with the expansions, then overstuffing a group is an option. CVA groups are tough nuts to crack. They can be made tougher depending on you overstuff them.

Any CVA group can be CVA+HE+LE+LE or CVA+HE+HE+LE normally.
HE=Heavy Escort, LE=Light Escort
By overstuffing a group with a DWE which is 5-6, you don't loose too much compot in the effort to keep your CVA on the line an extra round.
Remember lost escorts cannot be replaced between combat rounds but they do count against the command rating of the flagship.
This is of particular importance when attacking planets, starbases, or other fortified locations. BATS are too easy to cripple and kill in 2 rounds so a CVA group is not going to fight at one unless it is the only target in range. undefended BATS

I don't think it is in basic, but I saw something somewhere about using a CVE to overstuff a group as an inner escort. Is that only allowed with the third way or something? CV-CVE-HE-LE seems like
a great group too me, you could get in 3 attrition groups for 1 less total ship than using 3 standard CV groups.

And, Peter, I am going to take your advice as if you are the Kzinti player in my solo game. They will have 20 PDUs this turn, so I will send more ships to the Marquis SB on A5.

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Sunday, May 11, 2014 - 03:11 pm: Edit

Oh, and yes, I am building 2 B10s. 1 started turn 3 and the second starting now on turn 5. I would like to have 4 B10s from a strategic planning point of view, but 10 EP per turn for 2 of them seems like the most I can safely afford not having the experience to know how much spare money I will have in the future.

I guess I'll only have 2 B10's against the Feds instead of three and the Kzinti will have to be subjigated from the bridge of a CVA:-)

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Sunday, May 11, 2014 - 03:21 pm: Edit

Marc wrote:
>>I don't think it is in basic, but I saw something somewhere about using a CVE to overstuff a group as an inner escort. Is that only allowed with the third way or something? CV-CVE-HE-LE seems like a great group too me, you could get in 3 attrition groups for 1 less total ship than using 3 standard CV groups.>>

With the 3rd Way (which is in the basic rules), the Feds can hide a second carrier and traditional escorts in a single carrier group (and the whole group counts as 1 less ships). For example, a legal 3rd Way CVBG is something like [CVA, CVB, 5xNAC, 2xFE] which counts as 8 ships.

I think the CVE thing you are talking about is an expansion rule that lets other empires (or maybe just the Kzinti?) do something similar. It was in a Tac Note in a recent issue of CL.

>>And, Peter, I am going to take your advice as if you are the Kzinti player in my solo game. They will have 20 PDUs this turn, so
I will send more ships to the Marquis SB on A5.>>>

Oh, yeah, totally--if they have 20xPDU on Kzintai, they are probably safe with, like, 30 ships on the Capital (and a back up reserve off map that can go there just in case). If the Coalition storms the Kzinti Capital with all their ships on T7 instead of using those ships to hit the Feds, the Kzinti can send a reserve there, have about 40 ships, and even with, like, 200 Coalition showing up, it is very unlikely that they'll be able to strip all 20xPDUs *and* kill the SB in a single turn. And if they do, they will have taken an insane amount of damage that will take a long time to fix, which will make the Feds lives vastly easier.

Having the Marquis SB survive T7 is important. Make it hard for the Coalition to kill.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Sunday, May 11, 2014 - 04:03 pm: Edit

The CVEG (Expanded Carrier Group) is in Advanced Operations. This rule is much tougher for empires to use effectively because of the limit of 3 attrition squadrons from ships. Only the Kzintis with their BCS 3P plus CVE 3 groups and the Romulans using a SPB (or any carrier with) 8 and SKB 4 groups can use these rules without having to leave out additional fighters. CVPs are not effective in the CVEG rule because you are forced to use their fighter squadrons as 1.5 squadrons when placed inside the CVEG. As such CVDs and CVPs are better off as the third attrition squadron provider because their larger fighter groups count as a single fighter squadron under their rules.

Peter and Marc, I believe the Tac Note on this subject is the one I wrote regarding the effectiveness of efficiency regarding the grouping of attrition units under the CVEG rules. Keep in mind that really comes into play with the expansion rules and then late in the war.

On a different but related subject. The Romulans might be one coalition empire that could really use the Third Way rules effectively. A TH group combined with any Hawk based carrier that
carried 8 fighter factors would be fairly hard to cripple even with the Gorn DNT providing 14 points for directed damage.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Sunday, May 11, 2014 - 04:20 pm: Edit

Paul E, one of the great things about these forums is you can pick up on some good tactical hints and guides to help you become a better player. Not all hints and tac notes will correspond to your given style of play. As such, you should consider those that correspond to your style play with more care than those you feel don't correspond with your style of play. There is no right or wrong way to play.

Many alliance players tend to favor ships and tactics that are heavily oriented towards attrition units. Many coalition players try to find ways to use specialty units to try and reduce the utility of said attrition units.

As an alliance player I would prefer that you direct on my SWAC in the situation described in my Gorn Haymaker tac note. You are helping me because in your quest to run me out of SWACs (possible but unlikely) you are allowing me to take the rest of the damage on fighters thus preserving my ships by not having to cripple them or having them killed by your mauler.

As a coalition player, directing on the SWAC may be satisfying in the short term, in the long term your not helping you cause as much as directing on and killing the DE or DWE would be.

By Kevin Howard (Jarawara) on Sunday, May 11, 2014 - 04:33 pm: Edit

Marc M.

"Oh, and yes, I am building 2 B10s. 1 started turn 3 and the second starting now on turn 5."

I think you're only allowed to start construction of a B10 every other year. So Fall 169 (turn 3), and then Fall 171 (turn 7). You'll have to wait a bit longer for that 2nd B10.
Kevin speaks truth.

I see that now, I thought it had said every two turns, but it says 2 years so I guess I have 5 more EP to save for repairs this turn.

So it sounds like there is more to using a CVE as an inner escort than just throwing one in as an extra escort, or maybe it is not allowed until later years. It would be nice for the Kzinti, I would think. I need to get the expansions, just waiting for the new FO to come out.

>>So it sounds like there is more to using a CVE as an inner escort than just throwing one in as an extra escort>>

Correct. It is a whole other AO rule.

3rd Way for the Feds in the basic game allows them to combine 2 CV groups into 1 big CV group (that counts as fewer ships), which is aided by them being able to have 4 total squadrons in their line as well. So, for example, you could, if you were so inclined, build a line of:

DNG (C/F), 2x[2xCVS, 2xNAC, 2xFE], (SC)=100/EW

Without using command points (this is just using basic set stuff and yes, I realize this is not the most optimal of builds, but illustrates the point nicely and easily :-)

It has 24 fighters to soak damage and the only thing that can get shot off is an FE (or a very inefficient shot at the DNG or scout in formation)
I thought a Federation BB, CVL, NAC and FE was a good combo, the CVL leaves 1 fighter out so there is one full squad of fighters, the flag and a 4 point scout are protected, and you still have the formation box and the free scout box.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Sunday, May 11, 2014 - 06:35 pm: Edit

Bill, you might not have to leave out the 1 fighter factor off the CVL. The BB carries 6 F-15s for 4 fighter factors. 1/2 a squadron. Probably best asked in Q&A. I don't know that anyone has thought of that before as all other BB's except the Hydrans carry 8 fighters or 4 fighter factors.

That would be a good CVEG/FEG mix at the same time if legal because you have dial a EW level.

By chris upson (Misanthropope) on Sunday, May 11, 2014 - 08:05 pm: Edit

BBs aren't legal in a CVEG.

gorn space is the natural destination for D7As just because of all the meaty unescortable targets in that area, and D6M+ D7A is a pretty solid counter to the DNT in pursuit.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Sunday, May 11, 2014 - 09:04 pm: Edit

See (312.264). I don't think you really want to trade a D7A for a few frigates. BBs with fighters are considered to be medium carriers and therefore eligible to be in a CVEG. See SITs.

By Rob Padilla (Zargan) on Monday, May 12, 2014 - 08:04 am: Edit

318.435:

Quote:

'The following can never be part of a CVEG:
Battleships (except for BBV and BBS variants), PFTs (except SCSs or BCSs), LTFs, auxiliaries, or convoys.
Thanks Rob. I missed that when I went looking for it.

Paul, I didn't comment on the use of X-Ships against the DNT or DNG because I couldn't remember the X-Mauler rules. You only get 10 points total, so you have to do 18 to cripple one and 28 to kill it outright. Yes it is possible to generate a big enough line with a high enough BIR to do so, however, you might be giving the Fed/Gorn player more damage to kill another FF or 2.

edit:
Romulan X-Ships appear later in the war. Also the Fed CVA will probably be replaced with a SCS at that time so they will also get a boost in compot.

Thomas, my comments about X-ships were directed at Trent Telenko's tac note.

I agree with you that the SWAC may be the best or only target a group of retreating cripples could hit in the situation you describe, and agree with your suggested use of the DNT/DNG.

thomas

you appear to have missed my point. it is the DNT i plan to put into stasis. losing a D7A to kill a specialty DN (and saving a few of my other hulls in the process) is a sacrifice i can tolerate.
Chris, you do know you have to choose BIR 3 to do that, and if you don't have a functioning scout you will be shifted? I will be happy to have you up the BIR in my favor that way. A D7A is 12 to kill if you use that way. It is one of the few times I would trade killing frigates for a cruiser. You better hope I don't capture it as well or that is another 10 EPs you lose.

By Rob Padilla (Zargan) on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 - 07:23 am: Edit

Also don't forget if you use the stasis in Pursuit (as the pursued), it's automatically dead (312.264). So no need to direct on it, bag that group of FFs AND get a free D7A to boot!

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 - 09:09 am: Edit

Rob, thanks for making me reread that rule again. I originally misinterpreted it last night when I was looking it. Your almost right about it being automatically dead. The pursuing force of 6 needs 1 ship to survive uncrippled.

By Rob Padilla (Zargan) on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 - 10:13 am: Edit

Thomas, have you ever seen a pursued force that could do enough damage to kill a 60 Compot group of ships? I never have.

By chris upson (Misanthropope) on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 - 12:30 pm: Edit

rob,

you're clear that the "group of FFs" is appreciably smaller when taking out the 19 damage the DNT normally contributes, right?

a D7A, an outside chance at 10 EPs, and 2 small ships for a specialty DN and some chance at an FE? most coalition players are going to be quite content with that exchange, let alone avoiding the 5 ship massacre that was the alliance's original projection

By Rob Padilla (Zargan) on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 - 12:52 pm: Edit
Chris,

You do also realize you may miss the DNT right and freeze something else? Just because you have the D7A it isn't a given you'll freeze anything, while just *trying* to will result in it's loss.

And the DNT would not be a loss of 19 damage. If they're chasing a line full of cripples with something like: DNT, DNG, 4CVA, 3xPT, 2xSWAC that's around 71 Compot. Assume a line of a DN, the D7A and say a scout (3 EW flavor probably) and a bunch of crippled CW type ships and they'll have about 53 Compot in return. If the scout is not included then there will be a -1 shift on the SFG. Granted it can get you a mauler in the force but not sure if it's worth it.

Freezing one of the DNs you'll still need 21 damage to kill it, which will happen at 40% assuming no minus points (45% if there are 3 minus points). So a pursuer BIR of 2 will guarantee the pursued force cannot kill one of the DNs anyway if there are minus points. The pursued player could negate this a tiny bit by going for the 4 BIR, but then it's a 1 in 36 chance to kill one.

And if the DNT is frozen the pursuing player will still do an average of about 17 damage (vice 21), enough to bag a pair of crippled CWs (or 3 FFs) and the D7A for free. If they roll great they can do up to 24 damage (3 CWs or 4 FFs).

You'd want a mauler in the force for the double damage effect vs frozen units, imo.

Richard-
Not if the Coalition is the pursued force. I think that is the point of confusion here.
Exactly. While getting the double damage is nice, if the SFG can't hit anything you may not get it at all. And that -1 is pretty killer on the SFG.

Well, it's suicide for the SFG unit to be in the pursued force, so if you aren't also going to have a mauler, there's not much point.

Assuming a D7A, with a -1 shift you'd still have a 2/3 chance to hit something on each of your first two tries (unless you rolled a 6 on either try), so if you were going to use a D7A, use a mauler as well.

That's assuming you use a stasis ship at all of course. Essentially, if you anticipate vulnerable high cost pursuing units, perhaps you would.

Ask Lee H about being shifted with a -2 for a SFG attempt.

Was that the time when I learned that SFG ships shouldn't be used to attack starbases?

You got it Lee. 😊
Specially Hydran Starbases

pursued force gets a free scout. getting shifted by the swacs is ridiculous

of course you can miss the DNT. and of course you're also much more willing than the alliance to take that chance, since a) you're
risking an almost useless gimmick ship and b) your *other* stasis target is also a specialty dreadnought.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Saturday, May 17, 2014 - 02:53 pm: Edit

The pursued force does not get a free scout. See (307.31). They may use a scout as one of their three uncrippled ships allowed in the creation of the battle force.

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Saturday, May 17, 2014 - 03:50 pm: Edit

So, I am still on C5 in me learning game. I resolved all the battles in Hydran space except the capital hex. All BATS and SB are dead, all planets captured except the minor below the capital. All provinces are occupied and the off-map area is cut off from the capital. I am going to devastate all the planets in the capital except Hyrax this turn, and hopefully fight 1 round over Hydrax to take out 3 or 4 PDUs and run away on the minus points.

Next turn Hydrax will fall, but I don't see how to then be in position to attack the Feds on turn 7, most of my ships will still be on the Hydran border at the beginning of turn 7. So I am thinking of using Turn 7 to shift from the Hydran to Federation border and destroying the Marquis SB to begin driving a wedge between the Feds and Kzinti so the Feds can give them money.

Then turn 8 I will be able to take western Fed space, destroy 2 or 3 of the SBs and start a base building in sother Fed space to reach the Romulans.

So does this sound reasonable or do I seem to be off on anything. I understand basic F&E now and I am now more playing this solo game to learn the flow of F&E. What generally happens when and where, etc. It seems like it would take a considerable amount of planning to be able to both take Hydrax and attack the Feds on turn 7.

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Saturday, May 17, 2014 - 04:21 pm: Edit
Hello Marc, for what it is worth here is my two cents.

Since you will be assaulting Hydrax again on T6 the cripples you take that repair T7 can take part in a T8 invasion of the Federation, but those that will need to move to repair facilities T7 will not be available T8 except to form reserves--unless you strat-move them to their start lines on the Fed border T7 to be repaired at beginning of T8--which can work.

I recommend you strive to invade the Feds as early as possible because every turns' delay means an additional CVA among other things.

Taking 2 or 3 Fed SB the first turn of invasion may or may not be possible. It may be advisable to threaten Earth and then take the SB for cheaper in later turns once most ships are back defending the home world. Depending on your strategy you will want a hard-point base in southern Fed space to open and maintain a line of communication to the Romulans.

Yes, taking Hydrax and turning around to hit the Feds competently on T7 demands a tight schedule and planning. I discovered this the hard way same as you are now doing.

Good luck and thanks for posting.

Marc wrote:
>>Next turn Hydrax will fall, but I don't see how to then be in position to attack the Feds on turn 7, most of my ships will still be on the Hydran border at the beginning of turn 7.>>

What needed to happen to avoid this was to raid the Kzinti Capital on T2 to devastate planets, move all the cripples to FRDs, and then on T3, fix them and free strat move them to the Hydran border. Get, like, 200 ships in range of the Hydran Capital by the end of CT3. Hit the Capital on CT4 while killing BATS and pinning SBs (possibly killing one that is weakly defended). Fix all those ships and
kick the Hydrans out of their Capital on T5 or T6 at latest.

>>So I am thinking of using Turn 7 to shift from the Hydran to Federation border and destroying the Marquis SB to begin driving a wedge between the Feds and Kzinti so the Feds can give them money.>>

If you can kill the Marquis SB, you can probably reasonably attack the Feds instead. Which is probably a better plan, as giving the Feds a free turn of building and moving ships around never helps.

>>So does this sound reasonable or do I seem to be off on anything.>>

Nah. It all seems reasonable. I suspect that you started out thinking you could take both the Kzinti and Hydran Capitals before attacking the Feds (which isn't super likely) on T7, and then when that looked rough, you switched gears. Which is resulting in the Hydrans keeping their Capital a turn longer than they probably should, and fewer ships being in position to hit the Feds.

>> I understand basic F&E now and I am now more playing this solo game to learn the flow of F&E. What generally happens when and where, etc. It seems like it would take a considerable amount of planning to be able to both take Hydrax and attack the Feds on turn 7.>>

Oh, it is certainly doable. But requires decisive action, and not investing too much on the Kzinti front--T1 and T2, you can attack and kill whatever the Kzinti let you kill easy, and probably devastate some Capital planets on T3 and T4. The have enough ships up there to pin the Kzinti and continue to threaten them, and move a lot of ships to the Hydran front. In the basic game, it is completely possible to capture the Hydran Capital on T5 if the Hydrans aren't willing to cripple their whole fleet, or T6 if they are. In either case, it isn't that difficult to then reposition ships to continue putting pressure on the Kzinti and attack the Feds on T7.
Marc,

You will note that in many games the Coalition does delay the turn 7 attack, precisely for the reason that it's not always easy to finish the Hydrans and make a major attack by that point.

This is even more true with the expansions, with all the extra ships the Alliance has.

In other words, yes what you are looking at makes sense.

Great, thanks. Like I said, at this point I think I have a decent understanding of basic F&E and I am really continuing this game now to learn the flow of the game, and when things happen and where on the map they happen. This way when I play a real game I'll know about what to expect and when things happen and where on the map they happen. The hardest thing about playing a new game is not knowing what to expect, so by learning the flow of the course of the war I'll know that in my first real game against someone which will go a long way in helping me avoid any major mistakes.

It takes so long to play a game of this online I don't want to be completely clueless the first time I try it. That will be a while though, I am waiting on the edge of my seat for the new FO so I can get the expansions and learn the rest of the game.

The Federation seems like they will be kind of disappointing. It seems like they will lose so much territory, and have some of the cap planets devestated, and won't really be able to build all the really cool ships they are capable of building. I want to play the Federation and Romulans more than any other empires, but the more I learn the more it seems like the Federation won't be building all the awesome stuff I always assumed they would be building and will be forced to do a lot more base hulls than I always envisioned them doing.
I'd strongly recommend learning F&E to any old SFB players out there. If you are an old SFB junkie then F&E is just indescribably awesome:-)

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Saturday, May 17, 2014 - 07:17 pm: Edit

Marc,

Don't underestimate the Federation (or the Alliance in general). There are lots of ways that they can blunt the attack, and they usually can build lots of cool stuff. It really all comes down to how well the Kzintis and Hydrans have done in slowing down the Coalition. In my games as the Alliance, for instance, I've never lost the Hydran Capital before turn 8. Those extra turns helped the Feds a lot.

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 08:50 am: Edit

Pete wrote:
>>I've never lost the Hydran Capital before turn 8. Those extra turns helped the Feds a lot.>>

I'm intrigued. How do the Hydrans keep their Capital till T8 in the face of determined Coalition efforts? I mean, I could see how the Hydrans might be able to really make a stand if they both give up significant ship builds to maximize PDUs and then are willing to flee their Capital with their whole fleet crippled, but I always figure that both of those are less optimal in the long run than just losing the Capital a turn or two earlier.

In the last two regular basic 2K10 rules games I played (one now, one a couple years back), the Hydrans lost their Capital on T5, both games. In both games, the Coalition set up with a huge number of ships on the border, and they started degrading the Capital directly on T4 as soon as they crossed the border. Certainly in this last game, the Hydrans kind of bungled their own defense (It never in a million years occurred to me that the Coalition would be willing to cripple the number of ships they crippled to take the Capital on T5, so I didn't consider that they were actually going to stick around
after all the PDUs were dead, and so made a few bad decisions re: capital ship allocation, reserves, and the FCP fighters), but even if I had totally maximized defense over the Homeworld, the Capital would have fallen over on T6 anyway. And as it was, the Coalition still had, like, 30 crippled ships left over getting fixed on T7 instead of attacking the Feds.

Peter B.

Yeah, I don't blame you. I don't have any easy explanation for it. It could be the quality of the opponents I've had, but I've had a lot in the day, and some of them were pretty good.

I also expect that streak to end next time I play the Alliance, if I ever get to play the Alliance.

There was one game with Sandro Colacito that ended prematurely, and I think he may have taken the Hydran Capital before that point, since he was playing with the original SAFs (those things were monsters!) Also, Sandro is the best F&E player than I've personally gone up against. I wish he was still playing.

Heh. Original SAFs. Yick.

I could certainly see the Hydrans really make a go of it with expansion rules possibly (and all the extra ships and money).

I mean, as noted, if the Hydrans (using the basic rules) build maximum PDUs on T3 and T4 (and T5 if they get the chance), they will have a much stronger Capital. But they will also have half as many ships in play for the long run---on T3, the Hydrans can build a full run and afford about 2xPDU, so building the other two is going to pull 14xEP out of their ship budget, which is, like, 6 frigates. On T4, best case scenario assuming a concerted Coalition effort, the Hydrans can't afford to build *any* PDUs and a full ship build (that
is the turn that in basic F+E, they pay 16xEP for their second PAL). So if they sink 28 into 4xPDU, they'll end up building, maybe, 3 or 4 ships total. This will get them up to 16xPDU for what is likely a T5 assault to strip PDUs. Which will do a lot more damage than the 10xPDUs that they can afford if they maximize ship builds instead, so will probably keep the Capital alive for another turn at minimum, so that is certainly something as well. If the Hydrans are then willing to cripple a significant portion of their fleet defending the SB, that could possibly also keep the Capital alive another turn.

But then you end up keeping the Capital a couple extra turns, but have a not insignificantly smaller fleet, and then a whole lot of cripples that need to get off map and then won't be able to afford to repair. I can certainly see the advantage to making the Coalition work that much harder to take the Hydran Capital in the short run, but in the long run, I dunno if it is a better trade for the Alliance or not. But certainly interesting to look at.

I suspect Pete avoids losing Hydrax by keeping the coalition focused on the Kzinti. My impression is that he runs an aggressive Kzinti strategy.

Re: PDUs.

Just thinking about it, if in Basic F&E you maximize PDU builds on Hydrax you risk the coalition cutting you off from the off-map, taking your outer provinces and defenses, devastating the other capital planets, and then letting you keep the capital.

Ultimately the war is won or lost in the Federation, if the Hydrans build minimal ships from 3-7 WITHOUT the coalition impaling their fleet at Hydrax that may count as a coalition win.

The reason taking Hydrax is so important is that it costs the Hydrans 6 turns of builds and a bunch of money. The PDU heavy strategy risks costing them a bunch of builds even without the capital assault. Not just from the cost of the PDUs but also because
You're that much weaker at reconnecting your grid and can't afford to abandon the economically crippled capital.

A sort of self-inflicted mudslide. Avoid the hard-point you don't actually need to take now. (Advanced game there's enough extra income and enough crap you can build off-map that I don't think this would work.)

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 02:24 pm: Edit

This is actually exactly what I did. I bought max PDUs with the Hydrans on the first two turns which is why they have 16 PDUs on turn 5. I thought that was what everyone did, haha.

I've been thinking of Building both Klingon and Lyran SBs over the Hydran capital after I take it. The SBs right away, and then PDUs slowly (1 or 2 per turn). I am thinking this will allow me to leave less ships in Hydran space and make it almost impossible for the Hydrans to ever take it back. I am thinking the PDUs aren't needed until like turn 15 or so, and building just 1 per turn won't be too big of a financial burden.

Is this normal, or would that be a lot more EPs than is normally spent to cap off the Hydrans?

By Rob Padilla (Zargan) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 02:56 pm: Edit

I also build full PDUs turns 3 and 4 and do not see a significant sacrifice in ships built.

It helps a lot having the 5EP PAL activation for turn 4 though. To get through turn 3 I typically skip building the UH and use the free fighters as hybrid factors to reduce ship cost a bit.

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 03:09 pm: Edit

Doug wrote:
>>I suspect Pete avoids losing Hydrax by keeping the coalition focused on the Kzinti. My impression is that he runs an aggressive
Kzinti strategy. 

That is very possible. My experience (in the basic game) is that the Coalition can have enough ships to bottle up the Kzinti from hitting anything important and reasonably threaten the Capital if they do something dumb *and* still decisively kill the Hydrans by T6 (unless something wacky happens). In the expanded game, the dynamic is likely significantly different. In the basic game, however, the ship differential is such that the by T3, the Coalition can have 100 ships on the Kzinti front (which is more than the Kzinti will have) and 200 ships on the Hydran front.

Yeah, in this instance, the Kzinti can probably do a good job of killing provence garrison E4s, liberating captured planets (that won't produce income before they are recaptured), and maybe being squirrelly enough to take out a couple mostly unimportant BATS, but they will have a lot of trouble doing anything really serious to the Coalition without putting their Capital in jeopardy, and by the time they have enough ships to actually be a bother to the Coalition, the Hydrans are likely captured and they can move ships back to the Kzinti front.

Rob wrote:

>>I also build full PDUs turns 3 and 4 and do not see a significant sacrifice in ships built. >>

Yeah, see, again, basic F+E (which Marc is playing and discussing, and is the dynamic that I'm talking about) as opposed to advanced F+E.

You get to "build" a PAL on T4 for 5xEP and have a lot of salvage floating around from all those cruisers that the Coalition helpfully kills for you, and a bunch more ships to defend things and control territory with and there is a lot more money to work with.
Marc wrote:

>>This is actually exactly what I did. I bought max PDUs with the Hydrans on the first two turns which is why they have 16 PDUs on turn 5. I thought that was what everyone did, haha. >>

How many ship builds did you have to give up to get max PDUs?

My experience is that on T3, the Hydrans can build exactly a full run of ships (including the UH, as having that 3rd true carrier is very helpful) and then have enough left over for 2xPDU.

On T4, depending on what the Coalition do (and I'm assuming a concerted Coalition "Kill the Hydrans" plan here), there is usually enough money to build a full run of ships (including the 16 cost PAL, which they really want to build before they don't get another chance for a very long time) and then not have enough money left for any PDUs at all.

If they still have their Capital by AT5 (not that unlikely if you defend the Capital smartly, but even then, the Coalition can probably take it if they plan well and you don't want to cripple a significant portion of your fleet, which I know is certainly a debatable topic), they will probably have enough money in the Capital (as they will probably be cut off from the Old Colonies) to build a handful of ships or maybe a few PDUs, but at that point it is likely that the PDUs on the Capital are all gone anyway, so you build as many ships as you can.

There are a lot of thoughts certainly on what is or is not good to do with the Hydrans. I generally like to try and keep the Lyran border SB alive (which isn't *that* hard if the Coalition are super hot on killing the Capital), and then escaping the Capital when it goes down with a mostly uncrippled fleet and relocating them to the SB, which works well, assuming you don't then stupidly sacrifice the SB for nothing (which may be something I did recently...).

Escaping the Capital with a mostly crippled fleet one turn later than you would have otherwise is certainly another way to go, but personally, that strikes me as a less good plan. But then, I also
make stupid mistakes that haunt me for years afterwords, so what do I know :-)

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 03:21 pm: Edit

Keep in mind that if you are skipping 4 Hydran frigates (10 EPs for 4xHN) to get the additional 2 PDUs over the 2 you say you can afford to build your only giving up 2 SE because of the fighters.

If your coalition player is directing on 4 PDUs a turn, he's probably giving you the second and fourth round of combat for free damage on his fleet. Minus points must be resolved first before any other damage is done. With 24 involuntary minus points there isn't a lot left on average.

And that there is the reason Hydrans should not take a lot of approach battle damage on fighters.

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 03:35 pm: Edit

I have all that saved. On Turn 3 I built the UH, DE, AH, AH, build a DG as a TG, TR, CR, CU and 4 PDUs.

Turn 4 was PAL, 2xHR (I love these things so much I want to use one in SFB, I don't think I ever have), CR, 3xCU, and 4xPDU.

It was a hard choice between building 1xRN or 2xHR. I went with the HRs because it was more pin count and they seem like good dual-purpose ships for the Hydran that can be used like CWs on the line or as CVEs to feed fighters forward to bigger ships.

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 04:13 pm: Edit

With the coalition I've been building as many extra FFs on SBs as I can to increase pincount. I just counted and over the first 5 turns I've built 38 extra FFs above the build schedules, so building a FF per SB as much as possible seems like a good idea.

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 04:44 pm: Edit
Turtle wrote:

>>If your coalition player is directing on 4 PDUs a turn, he's probably giving you the second and fourth round of combat for free damage on his fleet. >>

Sure, but it is usually a better plan to hit 3xPDU a turn and then have few, to any, minus points on the next turn. For example using only basic rules (i.e. no G attacks or whatever), with a totally reasonable 120 compot fleet (likely a bit low, even, but still), at 27.5%, you do 33 damage. Kill 3xPDU for 20, soak 18 fighters, leaving you at -5 on the next turn. With slightly higher damage (not at all unlikely, assuming the Hydrans want to inflict maximum carnage early on), you avoid negatives all together. You end up taking a bit more damage per round overall, but fight over PDUs for fewer rounds (assume 16xPDU, doing 4-0-4-0-4-0-4-flee is 7 rounds of killing PDUs or soaking minus points and then abandoning the system to shake those last -24 points or whatever; doing 3-3-3-3-3-1 is only 6 rounds of killing PDUs, and there is even room for a turn of only hitting 1xPDU)

Marc wrote:

>>I have all that saved. On Turn 3 I built the UH, DE, AH, AH, build a DG as a TG, TR, CR, CU and 4 PDUs.>>

T3 build schedule is [UH, DE, 2xAH], DG, TR, 6xFF which is 12 ships and costs a total of 55.5 (assuming you use 6xFFF for the turn on the UH, and are paying .5 to for the light escorts, which is how much they actually cost these days). Add in 2xPDU for 14, and that is 69.5 of 74 EPs they start with, leaving about 4 saved for the future or for some other conversion (making another DE or two isn't at all out of the realm of reason).

You built 8 ships for 44.5, and then 4xPDU for 28, for a total of 72.5xEp, give or take (never build CRs. They are horrible--they are a 5/2 for 3.5 EPs, which is amazingly worse than even just an F5 and they have a terrible repair cost for the damage they absorb, and they aren't really getting you anything as a bonus for having
them; and there is a stupid tweak to construction that allows you to sub a regular LN for the UH and then convert a different LN to the UH and it saves you 2xEP). But are down 4 total hulls.

>>Turn 4 was PAL, 2xHR (I love these things so much I want to use one in SFB, I don't think I ever have), CR, 3xCU, and 4xPDU.>>

T4, the Hydran schedule is PAL, RN, 2xHR, TR, 6xFF for 11 hulls, costing a total of (assuming 6xFFF available) 56.5 (which the Hydrans might not even *have* on T4...).

You built PAL, 2xHR, CR, 3xCU for 37 (again, leaving you down 4 hulls) and then 4xPDU for 28 for a total of 65, which is a lot for the Hydrans to still have at the start of T4, but not impossible.

So you did get +8xPDU on their homeworld, but lost out on 8 build slots (including a bunch of cruisers), and benefitted from the Coalition (which is also you, but understandable as this seems to be your first game) not being as aggressive to Hydran space on T4 as they can be.

Keep in mind that one of the main uses of the Hydrans in the long term is that they tie up Coalition ships that are better used elsewhere. And certainly if you still have some sort of on map asset after the Capital falls (Lyran border SB, that back planet, whatever), every Hydran hull on the map generally ties up 2 Coalition hulls (until you dumbly get pinned off the map with no on map assets at all, which I know nothing about...).

By Paul Howard (Raven) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 05:35 pm: Edit

Hydrans can always downgrade ships to build FF's.

And unless your playing without Flexible Carrier Groups, you can save 0.5 Ep's per AH...

You should be able to scrape enough cash to build the main hulls, a stack of CU's and 4 PDU's a turn.
Each hull NOT built, reduces what the Coalition need to keep in Hydran space by 1 or more ships.

And as Peter said - never build CR's!

I believe that Doug is correct. I have in the past played a very aggressive Kzinti and it's probably the reason why I've been able to keep the Hydran capital alive as long as I have.

But I used CEDS extensively as the Kzintis. Now that it's gone I'm not sure I could do the same stuff, or at least not as well.

That's why for me personally the removal of CEDS represented a dramatic weakening of the Kzinti. I'll have to play them again retool my approach a bit.

My personal view is that with the removal of CEDS, the CLE being part of the starting Kzinti navy and the flexible carrier groups (which again in my view helps the Klingons much more than the Kzintis), the Kzintis are the weakest they have ever been in basic F&E. That would mean that the Hydran capital would fall much faster.

I'd like to play it a bit though before making up my mind on where the balance lies in 2k10. Peter B. makes a credible case that it is pro-Coaltition. I'd like to play it and see.

Unless 2010 changed something those frigates built on SB are NOT extra, they come off the usual build schedule or need to be overbuilt.

>>I just counted and over the first 5 turns I've built 38 extra FFs above the build schedules, so building a FF per SB as much as
possible seems like a good idea.>>

Oh, heh, yeah. You don't get to build *extra* FFs at those SBs. You can just build one FF per SB out of your regular build, which is helpful for getting some extra ships to the front line quicker. That rule doesn't allow you to build extra FFs over and above the regular production schedule.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 08:02 pm: Edit

At least not until minor shipyards!

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Sunday, May 18, 2014 - 08:47 pm: Edit

Oh, wow, I misunderstood that. I thought each SB could build a 3 pt or less ship above the schedule. I'm glad I mentioned that now.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Monday, May 19, 2014 - 06:41 am: Edit

The CLE is better than an ad-hoc CL.

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Monday, May 19, 2014 - 08:22 am: Edit

>>The CLE is better than an ad-hoc CL.>>

Oh, it certainly is. But in the pre-2K10 version of basic (i.e. 2K and before), ad-hoc CLs didn't exist, and neither did CLEs. You just took CLs and magically converted them into MECs that were inside the CV group counter. All CVs were always escorted by MECs, an you were allowed to convert CLs into those MECs. Which was nice, and something that the Kzinti lost out on in 2K10, but still, I think the current rules are both more sensible and better overall.

I'm not a huge fan of the CLEs in 2K10, but it really, they aren't that big of a deal. I think the biggest flaw with the CLEs in the basic rules set (other than them sucking for the first few turns) is that 2K10 has no two step conversions, and a very explicit rule that if you want to convert one variant (CLE) to another variant (CVE), you have to pay an extra EP, making it really inefficient. Otherwise, I'd
be converting now useless CLEs into some cheap CVEs on a semi-
regular basis (as I like CVEs for hunting down province garrisons.
And they are just as good as feeding fighters forward as CVs are).

I actually decided that PDUs were simply never worth it. Sure, they
give you maybe +6 damage per pair over a capital, but I'd rather
have 1 frigate than a PDF. That 1 frigate will probably contribute
more damage over its lifetime. It'll also be useful if the enemy
aren't sitting over your homeworlds (which you pretty much always
lose anyway). A PDU has no ability to project firepower, pin fleets,
or engage the enemy, and a few more cripples to the Coalition
won't change anything.

Heck, say you lose all your PDUs on a capital, a dozen, that is 84 EP
to replace them. Heck, you can build a starbase for that which can
take far more damage and has actual functions outside of sitting
there being a damage sponge. But still, 7 EP for 1 PDU vs 5 EP for 2
frigates, no thanks, I can't see any reason to do that.

Yeah, see, again, basic F+E (which Marc is playing and discussing,
and is the dynamic that I'm talking about) as opposed to advanced
F+E.

You get to "build" a PAL on T4 for 5xEP and have a lot of salvage
floating around from all those cruisers that the Coalition helpfully
kills for you, and a bunch more ships to defend things and control
territory with and there is a lot more money to work with.

Oh I realized that, that's why I made sure to say it was with the DN
activation instead of the full 16 EP build. Lot's of things change in
Base F&E for the Hydrans and I agree it is much harder. Salvage is not nearly the factor you think it is though for Hydran T4. If they are loosing that many cruisers T3 that it allows them to afford 2 or 3 PDUs you pretty much lost them all. Not a good trade.

In basic F&E (and it's been a long time so bear with me), I would have the Hydrans build 4xPDUs (always my first budget item for T3) and then do the following:

UH, DE build slots: 2xLN - 12 EP
DG slot: TG - 7.5 EP
TR slot: TR - 5 EP
3xCU slots: 3xCU - 7.5 EP

That's 60 of 74 EPs spent. I would then do for conversions:

LN to UH - 4 EP, 6 FFF
3xLN to 3xDE - 6 EP
3xHN to 3xAH - 1.5 EP

Puts me at 71.5 EPs spent. I can then buy another HN, maybe do another AH conversion and another 2 point conversion, or save it for next turn.

So I give up 4 or 5 build slots (all FFs) Turn 3 to build 4xPDUs.

Choosing not to build the UH (which is questionable in Base F&E), you can instead use the FFF to offset fighter costs in the builds/conversions and get:

UH/DE: 2xDE - 10 EP and 3 FFF
DG: TG - 6.5 EP and 0.5 FFF
TR: HR - 5 EP and 1.5 FFF
3xCU: 3xCU - 7.5 EP

For a cost of 29 EP (57 EP with 4 PDUs), leaving 17 to spend. For conversions since you've built 2xDE already:

Convert 2xLN to 2xDE - 2 EP and 1 FFF (all 6 spent now).
4xHN to 4xAH - 2 EP

Leaves 13 leftover. That can build the remaining 5 FF slots for 12.5, you can save it for T4 ot do some conversions and save the rest. In base F&E I'd probably bank the 13 for a down-payment on my T4 PAL.

For Hydran Turn 4, it's reasonable to assume they will be down income from at least all of the outer provinces and 416. That should put them in the ballpark of having an income of about 60 EP. It could go lower than that if the Coalition is more aggressive but it's a good average number. With the 13 EPs saved they'll have around 73 EPs to spend and 6 FFF.

So they can build:
4xPDU - 28 EP
PAL - 22 EP
TG - 7.5 EP
TR - 5 EP

At a cost of 62.5 EP. Since last turn you already converted enough DEs and AHs, you can convert the UH this turn.

LN to UH - 4 EP and 6 FFF

66.5 EPs now spent. Leaving us about 6.5 EP. That can be 2xFFs, conversions or saved. This turn is the rough one for the Hydrans because of the PAL. They gave up 8 build slots including 2xHR which are just not affordable if you build the PAL. Again, if the UH is not built, those 6 FFF can offset the cost of the hybrid fighters allowing this build schedule:

PAL - 16 EP and 3 FFF
TG - 7.5 EP
2xHR - 10 EP and 3 FFF
TR - 5 EP

For a cost of 66.5 EP, again leaving 6.5 leftover.
Then T5 you can build the CV, forget about any more PDUs and build what you can. If the UH is a must have unit (and I'm not arguing it's not for Base F&E), a PDU from T3 could be cancelled so you could fit it in, but I wouldn't cancel more than that.

In the full game the Hydrans get a big boon in the GRV, which gives them that third Medium CV as part of the OOB. Yes it's not as good as the UH, but it's a carrier which is pretty much the only reason you're building the UH anyway, so you can have 3 CVs.

Pete wrote:
>>That's why for me personally the removal of CEDS represented a dramatic weakening of the Kzinti. I'll have to play them again retool my approach a bit. >>

I can really see how you could get a great deal of leverage out of the CEDS rules with the expanded game (a lot more ships relative to the Coalition meaning more opportunity for offensive action, more money to pay for repairs, etc.), but my experience (which is vast but not necessarily brilliant :-) is that in the basic game, it was very difficult for the Kzinti to get a lot of mileage out of the CEDS rules, simply 'cause they couldn't afford it.

In the basic game, I think CEDS helped the Klingons vastly more than the Kzinti. The Feds were always more capable of using those rules aggressively due to the higher income as well, but still, the Klingons and Romulans for the first half of the war always seemed to be far more capable of taking advantage of CEDS than the Kzinti and Feds ever did.

Rob wrote:
>>Oh I realized that, that's why I made sure to say it was with the DN activation instead of the full 16 EP build. Lot's of things change in Base F&E for the Hydrans and I agree it is much harder. Salvage is not nearly the factor you think it is though for Hydran T4. If they are loosing that many cruisers T3 that it allows them to afford 2 or
3 PDUs you pretty much lost them all. Not a good trade. >>

Oh, heh, like I'd never say it was a good trade. Just, well, a likely outcome--I'd imagine that if they Hydrans do *anything* on T3 (kill a couple Lyran BATS, fight a pinning fight against the Lyrans by the SB), they are probably losing 2-3 ships, of which most will be cruisers. Which is 5-6 points of salvage income which, at that point, is significant. Again, not something I'd volunteer for, but something that will probably happen. Unless the Hydrans totally just cover their heads on T3, which, if the Coalition is very aggressively set up, isn't at all out of the realm of reason :-)

Yeah, so it seems perfectly possible that the Hydrans *can* get 4xPDU on each of T3 and T4 which is arguably a good idea. But they are going to have to give up a significant number of ships to do it. I'd never claim I'm brilliant at this game or playing the Hydrans, but I always like to err on the side of "get all the ships", due to the way the main game dynamic (in the basic game) shakes out (i.e. "pin everything and kill what you can with what you have left to move" is how both sides generally operate).

In my current game, even with the Hydrans kind of accidentally losing their Capital on T5, I think the Hydrans would have been doing pretty well overall, *if* I hadn't have incredibly stupidly lost the Lyran Border SB when I did on T10 (which was the result of thinking the Hydrans could actually have won a fight in a hex adjacent to the Old Colonies. But they couldn't. And didn't. So they had to retreat off map. And couldn't retrograde back to the SB. And so it got killed on the next turn. Otherwise, they'd still be sitting on that SB threatening both the Lyran EB SB and the held Hydran Capital. Gah.)

By Matthew Smith (Mgsmith67) on Monday, May 19, 2014 - 09:09 am: Edit

Quote:

I actually decided that PDUs were simply never worth it.
It's not the damage they do. (Though the damage is nice.)

It's the fact that they buy you time, and time is the one thing the Alliance really needs.

It's not unreasonable to have 16 PDU over Hydrax by the first time the Coalition comes into the capital.

And those 16 PDU (8 more than the at-start force) are going to buy you at least one turn, perhaps two, if you avoid the use of directed damage when the Coalition comes in.

However, if you're just going to use directed damage so that the Coalition can take your capital on CT5 no matter what, then yes, you probably want ships instead of PDUs.

Eric wrote:
>>I actually decided that PDUs were simply never worth it.>>

Yeah, I dunno that you'll get much support for that notion.

I mean, yeah, I certainly will, for the generally fatalistic Hydrans, skimp on PDUs in the name of ships, but I still want some extra PDUs (in my current game, even with only 10xPDU on the Capital, I probably could have kept the Capital till CT6 if I hadn't bungled defense there due to not in a million years considering that the Coalition would have been willing to cripple as many ships as they did to kill the Capital on T5, so I made some reserve and/or resource allocation errors). But generally speaking, having more PDUs on your Capital means the Coalition is harder pressed to take it.

The Kzinti Capital with 20xPDU and a SB is *vastly* less likely to accidentally get captured when it seems opportunistically reasonable for the Coalition to take it than the Kzinti Capital with 8xPDU and a SB. Etc.
So let's say you build 8 PDU's for 56 EP instead of purchasing 22 CU (or 11 overbuilt).

They will only net you 2 additional turns in combat, or about 108 compot over those 2 turns.

22 CU are 88 Compot on the line, and another 44 if you throw them up on the line as crippled. That also nets you 2 more turns and 22% more compot, you get 13.75 EP in salvage back, compared to 0 with PDUs.

But don't get them destroyed. *Surely* over the course of the game those 22 CU's will fight twice each, sometimes many more. After that 2nd battle, they have already done more damage to the Coalition than the PDUs ever could have. Also, once your capital falls the additional 22 pinning factors can make a huge difference in the game.

I know the whole "huge compot" thing is great, and doing 100 damage to a line is awesome, but in the grand scheme of things you will still lose your capital, and the Coalition can easily repair all those cripples and there is nothing you can do to stop him. The PDU's buy 2 rounds of combat in a battle you can't win, so you don't get another turn of production or anything by them being there. All they buy you is maybe another 20 EP in damage to the Coalition fleet, and you blew 56 EP creating them.

Strategically, in the long run, the CU's are simply a far better value. PDU's are a bit of a deterrent though, and maybe having 20 PDUs on a capital means the enemy needs to build up 1 more turn, but I can't put much weight in losing 1 turn of build with an already hurting economy compared to starting the new shipyard 1 turn earlier and saving the fleet to keep a huge coalition fleet pinned in the region.

Even if you overbuild them, though it isn't as quick of a ROI, it still does have a return.
Some other options for 56 EP (I wasn't sure if you doubled fighter cost on overbuilt non-carriers so I listed both):
22 CU, or 11 Overbuilt
9 LN (18 Fighters), or 5 Overbuilt (10 Fighters), or 4 Overbuilt with fighter cost doubled (8 Fighters)
7 HR (21 Fighters), or 4 Overbuilt (12 Fighters), or 3 Overbuilt with fighter cost doubled (9 Fighters)
5 DG (7.5 Fighters) or 3 Overbuilt (4.5 Fighters), or 2 Overbuilt with fighter cost doubled (3 Fighters)
5 RN (20.5 Fighters), or 3 Overbuilt (13.5 Fighters), or 2 Overbuilt with fighter cost doubled (9 Fighters)
7 DE (21 Fighters), or 4 Overbuilt (12 Fighters) or 3 Overbuilt with fighter cost doubled (9 Fighters)

I personally think the CU's are best, as that is a lot of pinning factors, but having another 3+ DE's can make a huge difference in the battles after the capital falls.

No Eric, they net you two more turns of YOUR ENTIRE FLEET plus the rest of the PDU plus the SB all doing damage to the coalition and them shooting nothing but those PDUs.

That's something like 200 extra damage to the coalition. Not 108 compot over two turns of combat, it's the EXISTENCE of two extra turns of combat over your fixed defenses on which your ENTIRE capital defense shoots at them, and they give you minus points that they then need to work off or carry into pursuit.

88 ComPot is what they give you if they're sitting isolated with nothing else present. Which will never be the case since they've got a SB and 8 other PDU already present.

Eric, you've made some assumptions and PDU and ship use that probably won't play out the way you think.
They will only net you 2 additional turns in combat, or about 108 compot over those 2 turns.

Actually, it's more like 3-4 turns depending on dice. The reason is that the Alliance will usually force the killed fighters to become large minus points that the Coalition has to chew through. Otherwise, the Coalition is limited to typically killing 2-3 PDU per turn, which only results in more damage overall to the Coalition. So, pick your poison, but you're looking at 3-4 rounds to kill 8 PDUs, depending on dice.

22 CU are 88 Compot on the line, and another 44 if you throw them up on the line as crippled. That also nets you 2 more turns and 22% more compot, you get 13.75 EP in salvage back, compared to 0 with PDUs.

You cannot put 88 compot of CUs on the line. The best you could do is 13*CU lead by a PAL in form, which would be 69 compot. Yes, you get salvage from CUs but not PDUs, but 8*PDU in the context of 12 other PDUs is doing line-crippling damage where as the damage from 69 compot is likely to be absorbed by Coalition fighters for nothing.

But don't get them destroyed. *Surely* over the course of the game those 22 CU's will fight twice each, sometimes many more. After that 2nd battle, they have already done more damage to the Coalition than the PDUs ever could have. Also, once your capital
falls the additional 22 pinning factors can make a huge difference in the game.

Actually, no, not surely. It's likely those CUs may never see compot, or if they do it's as ad-hoc outer escorts for Hydran carrier lines and thus tend to die fairly quickly (and only having 1 compot besides). The REAL benefit to 22 CU versus those PDUs is the extra pin count.

Now, extra pin count for a large fraction of the game, that is big. So big it might be worth the trade off of line crippling damage for a few rounds.

Quote:

I know the whole "huge compot" thing is great, and doing 100 damage to a line is awesome, but in the grand scheme of things you will still lose your capital, and the Coalition can easily repair all those cripples and there is nothing you can do to stop him. The PDU's buy 2 rounds of combat in a battle you can't win, so you don't get another turn of production or anything by them being there. All they buy you is maybe another 20 EP in damage to the Coalition fleet, and you blew 56 EP creating them

The point is valid, but the numbers are off. The basic rule of thumb is each point of damage does 1/4 of an EP of cripples, assuming no fighters or other means of absorbing damage. You're facing line crippling damage over the course of roughly 3-4 rounds, and even then you're crippling half your line. Let's assume 6 rounds of line crippling 100 damage (treating two rounds of half-line crippling damage as one). That's 600 damage, which translates into roughly 150 EPs of damage, not 20 you assert. And this number is fairly conservative. I've repaired upwards of 800 repair points (200 EPs) assaulting capitals over multiple turns before.
If you don't buy those PDUs, then not only are you doing less line crippling damage, but that super-high damage goes away a lot more quickly. Which means your capital goes down a lot more quickly, and much more cheaply for the Coalition.

Not to mention often the Coalition is going to self kill ships to keep his compot up or to save specialty ships when facing line crippling damage. That will reduce Coalition pincount somewhat and increase the EP damage you have done to him when the day is out.

Nevertheless, the pincount effect of 22 extra CUs is *huge*. So huge it might be worth settling for not doing that kind of damage to the Coalition.

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**Quote:**

Strategically, in the long run, the CU's are simply a far better value. PDU's are a bit of a deterrent though, and maybe having 20 PDUs on a capital means the enemy needs to build up 1 more turn, but I can't put much weight in losing 1 turn of build with an already hurting economy compared to starting the new shipyard 1 turn earlier and saving the fleet to keep a huge coalition fleet pinned in the region.

The first statement is incorrect. The issue is actually fairly muddy. The effect of all those PDUs is far greater in terms of damage production. BUT that *assumes* the Coalition is going to come in and take the damage. If their strategy is to, say, do a mudslide and never hit the Zin or Hydran capital planets, then you've wasted a huge amount of cash building PDUs. But if they do come in it's quite possible the truly huge damage you do will pan out in terms of delay to the Coalition, making the PDUs better.

Also, you substantially underestimate the deterrence value. If I have to fight 20*PDU I'm far less likely to try to take the capital in the first place. If you never build PDUs, then I might see that and come in and strip the PDUs off the capital planet *first* and then on
the next couple of turns strip the other planets and finally come in for the final capital assault. I might not do that if I know I'm facing 4+ rounds of line crippling damage.

This deterrence value also affects pincount substantially. If it's more likely that your capital survives, then it's more likely you will not lose 6 turns of shipyard production (not to mention 90 EPs rebuilding your shipyard). In that sense, buying PDUs is way worth it.

However, there is truth in saying that 22 extra CUs makes a big difference. That's 22 more ships the Klingons have to put in the HTO and not fighting Feds. 22 CUs don't really matter, they're easy to kill, but those 22 CUs allow the Hydran Lines of Death (TM) to reach your hard points trying to hold Hydrax. Now THAT matters.

So, there very much is merit to building those extra ships and not PDUs. But it is not black and white in favor of CUs as you say it is.

You need to pay attention to what the opponent does and act accordingly.

By Ted Fay (Catwhoeatsphoto) on Monday, May 19, 2014 - 11:29 am: Edit

Eric, my numbers are based on long experience. I've assaulted capital systems dozes of times in my F&E career since restarting in 2008. I've defended capital assaults more than a few times. I've playd assaults both with and without extra PDUs. It's *far far* more painful to the Coalition than an extra 100 damage.

When your analysis is off it's because you don't fully understand how the game gets played out against a wily opponent. While your math is great, but your input is sometimes based on faulty assumptions, meaning you get faulty conclusions.

There really is a good reason to build 22 CU instead of 8*PDU - BUT this issue is not clear cut. You have to see what your opponent is doing and respond accordingly.

Play a few more games at least through C18 and then you'll have a
much better grasp of how the game plays out against a live opponent.

Yes, I will play you again if you want. This time I would suggest I play Alliance so you can test your theories on how the assaults will proceed.

By Ted Fay (Catwhoeatsphoto) on Monday, May 19, 2014 - 11:34 am: Edit

One last thing. If you never upgrade the PDUs on a capital planet, then you only get an extra 100-200 damage out of those PDUs (which includes fleet damage). So, you're likely to do only 50 extra EP damage, as opposed to the 150+ if you maxed out to 20 PDUs. The effect of more PDUs is somewhat non-linear because you have the additive effect of the additional surviving PDUs on the subsequent rounds of combat. I.e., your first 4 PDUs do damage for far longer if you started with 20, vice when you started only with 8. That has an additive effect that creates substantially more damage.

I guess what I'm saying is that when you buy 4*PDU you cannot simply add in the damage of those 4*PDU, you also have to add in the *additional* damage the other PDUs under it will do because of the required additional time required to chew through them.

By Kevin Howard (Jarawara) on Monday, May 19, 2014 - 11:40 am: Edit

Edit: Written about 5 replies ago. Dang my slow fingers!

*~*~*

To kill the 8 PDU would take 4 rounds (kill 4 PDU, burn 'minus-points' from fighters, kill 4 PDU, burn 'minus-points'). So the difference between the 8 original PDU and 16 PDU is:

8 PDU is 72 firepower, which after 1 round would be reduced to 36 firepower, stay the same for the next round as minus points are burned off, still at 36 firepower for the next round, and then at 0 for the 4th round as minus points are burned off.
Plus 48 for the Starbase each of those four rounds.

Plus say 150pt fleet for that entire time. That's 936 firepower for those four rounds, at 30% would be 281 damage.

With 16 PDU, it would be 144 firepower, 108 for two rounds (one to burn minus points, one as the next 4 PDU are killed), 72 for two rounds (ditto), 36 for two rounds (ditto), and then 0 as the last of the minus points are burned.

Plus the starbase for 48 for all *eight* rounds.

Plus the fleet of 150 for all eight rounds.

For a total of 2160 firepower over 8 rounds, at 30%, for 648 damage.

Add to that the fact that the super high firepower rounds will tend to kill way more ships - 80 pts of damage will cripple quite a few ships, but 120 damage will mean many of them outright die.

And to add insult to injury, the Hydrans will be free to pack their line to silly extremes - I mean, if the Hydrans were to put 2 PAL and 2 BTG on the line with the TG(FSP) in formation, I'd kill a PAL or BTG every round, even if fighting over a starbase. But over the starbase and 16 PDU? I'd be insane to kill anything but the PDU's, at least until they're down to reasonable levels.

And those extra PAL's and BTG's will mean 18-20 or so extra firepower per round. Doesn't seem like much, just 5-6 extra damage per round, but atop of damage that has already crippled an entire line and killed many more, that 5-6 extra damage is another ship dead every round.

Then add 4 more PDU atop of that, if you can!

*~*~*
Note: The above calculation was done on the assumption of 4 PDU killed one round, then none the next while burning fighters. That was the standard set in previous examples. However, in most games I've seen, the coalition can usually burn 5 PDU over two rounds, so it won't quite be as bad as depicted.

Unless the Hydrans roll a six. Which they always will. G*dd*mn smelly trashcans.

LOL, Kevin. Nice to see my guestimated numbers were matching yours, at least roughly speaking.

But Kevin did raise another point. The FLEET itself will have a much higher compot when there are 20 PDUs as the defender will put up only the very best DNs, LAVs, BTs, etc. The fleet could bust 150 compot, instead of the more typical 90 to 100 compot Hydran lines. Those PDUs allow that extra 50 compot for around 6-10 rounds or so, which also counts.

Even if you ignore the fleet so you're only counting "extra damage done" (which is not good, IMO, as you're not getting the true line crippling implications of 20*PDU) you're still looking at at least 400 extra damage, which is about 100 EPs done to the enemy.

Ted,

If you play a game with Eric, can I get a piece of the action?

I've never played with you on my side and I would like to dust off my Alliance play.

Of course if you two just want one on one I understand.
Pete, sure. But Eric may not have time or be interested. I may have laid down the gauntlet, but he doesn't have to pick it up.

Actually, Eric might benefit from partnering with a highly experienced Coalition player such as yourself. Assuming you and he are interested, of course.

By Eric S. Smith (Badsyntax) on Monday, May 19, 2014 - 01:29 pm: Edit

Well I never said ONLY a bunch of CUs.

Take the SB, the 12 PDUs the capital comes with, a good command ship, and you can put a 10 CU line together with its 40 compot, adding to a PAL+6 fighters, and you still have over 200 compot.

If 8 PDU's added 4 more turns, yeah that would double the 108 compot to 216. Still, at 35%, that is 76 additional damage going to be done, which results in about 40 EP to the Coalition. If you had to overbuild the CU's the value becomes far less, and it would take far longer to recoup.

Doing more damage at once does have the advantage of doing more damage after fighter losses on the attacker are taken, there is that.

I did play against you Ted, and I saw how easy plopping a D6M on the line reduced those PDUs to nothing, and how easily your D5 line with a carrier group was able to cripple itself and get fixed later. While sure, some more damage *is* great against the attacker as a defender, fact is they can still repair everything you dish out. 10 or 20 more crippled ships really isn't that big a deal with a 500+ ship fleet.

Damage is damage. I can see no difference between 300 compot for 4 rounds, and 200 compot for 6. The damage averages out to the exact same thing. The only variable is how much of the damage inflicted is on attrition units, on cheaper war hulls to repair, and depot/salvage/captured events.
And what if the enemy comes in, kills 4 PDUs, and leaves, making the minus points in fighters completely useless? Ted knew how to use that against the Kzinti.

120 damage cripples a battle line, but probably doesn't kill anything but maybe a frigate or two. When the coalition attacks, it's with a couple command points and loads of war cruisers and D7s that can absorb the damage.

Granted, the Hydrans have the choice of saving their fleet or not. If they do not save it, they can do a LOT more damage to the Coalition. But that damage is temporary as it'll get fixed, while the Hydran damage is forever. That is a choice folks make in games. The Hydrans are hard pressed to make their full builds each turn without making any PDUs.

Some cool scenarios would be folks saving their game before capital assaults, and posting those forces. Then, say in the Hydran's case, battles could be fought out the various tactics to see how things could turn out. However, it couldn't take into account the strategic effects of such a battle over time.

And Ted, if I decide to play again, with you, it'll be continuing our previous game. I thought I was doing pretty decent all things considered. However, after entering in everything the other day for conversion into my new CB replacement I realized I have already forgotten a lot of the rules 😞

I didn't think I was sucking, I thought about 60% of my issues were just rules didn't match what I logically thought would happen which was extremely frustrating, and the rest just my inexperience which was acceptable (like reserve placement, capital assaults, cutting supply lines, etc). I did get to attack the Lyran capital as a Kzinti player, and I was a newb vs a "veteran", so I must not suck *that* bad 😞
They will only net you 2 additional turns in combat, or about 108 compot over those 2 turns.

You misunderstood me.

I wasn't saying that you'd get two additional rounds of combat.

I was saying you'd get two additional turns of production from your capital before it falls.

Two more economic phases, producing and repairing ships. Two more chances to build those 22 HN/CU that you didn't build while building the PDUs.

PDUs buy time, and that's worth something. Because really, time is the only thing the Alliance has going for it. Time buys space, and space (province & planet income) buys more EP.

---edit---

I didn't think I was sucking,

I don't think anybody said you were.

I was just trying to at least get you to understand the other side of the argument.
CUs and HN contribute absolutely nothing to capital defense. They
don't delay one second the moment you lose your capital. If you're
putting them on the line over your capital, except as carrier escorts,
you've already had too many ships crippled or killed. But you only
need as many HN/CU for capital defense as you have carriers. The
rest will not see battle at the capital before it falls.

And that's the value of the PDU builds. You can take the reduction
of Hydrax from a 1 turn assault to a 2 or possibly 3 turn assault,
thereby "buying" another turn or two of production from your
shipyard, and another turn or two of economics from your capital
before the capital is reduced.

I'd always choose to "buy" another turn of production from my
capital. That's going to be worth something. And that something,
when added to the value of the damage I did to the coalition when
he comes in to destroy the 56 EP worth of PDU that I built on AT3
and AT4, will easily add up to far more than 56 EP worth of benefit.
It could even be 100 EP worth of benefit.

Because, it's not just the 100 EP worth of benefit for the Hydrans. It
also benefits the Federation, who gets a little more breathing room,
which in turn also helps the Gorn a little further down the line.

By Ted Fay (Catwhoeatsphoto) On Monday, May 19, 2014 - 01:41 pm: Edit

Eric, you should play another game. Doesn't have to be against me.
You *should* take Coalition against a veteran Alliance player. If you
do I think you will understand the Coalitions weaknesses a lot
better.

Rob Padilla would be outstanding at showing how good Alliance play
can stymie the Coalition. I know, he spanked me hard back in
2008. 😊

Pete D is a great player, Alliance or Coalition.

Bunches of guys on this BBS can play Alliance against your
Coalition.
Seriously. Just put up a request for an Alliance player and you'll probably get a taker within a week. If not, try again in a month when people might have more time.

Right now, it's all just talk. Until you play Coalition against a good Alliance player you will not really understand how the dynamics of Coalition play pans out in reality.

By Eric S. Smith (Badsyntax) On Monday, May 19, 2014 - 02:07 pm: Edit

If +8 PDUs buys 2 more *turns*, than yeah, its better purchase. However, at that point the Hydrans are probably down to 30 or so EP a turn anyway, and in some ways it may be better to lose the capital sooner to get the new shipyard up as they aren't building much and will probably just end up getting cut off and hammered. Just hard for me to see how +56 compot in defense is going to make a coalition fleet spend 2 turns preparing for it, when they can build well over 100 compot per turn.

Yeah Ted, I know there are plenty of people willing to play. However, until I finish a game or at least fight it until its obvious one side looses, I can't in good conscious start all over again on turn 1. Plus, its a lot of time. I think it took a year of playing quite a lot to get to turn 12, and I've been kinda busy (and unmotivated) as of late.

So, PDUs, the good:
- Deterrent, may postpone the inevitable
- Higher compot battle lines
- Up to 24 minus points per turn

The bad:
- Expensive (1.3 Compot per EP, CU is 2.4, 3.2 counting salvage)
- Immobile
- Doesn't stop the inevitable
- No salvage when lost
- Can lose up to 4 in a single turn

This isn't an argument restricted to any particular faction really, I'm
just trying to say that EP per Compot, the frigates are better, and have more uses.

I'll also mention that Richard Eitzen and Michael Calhoon have already stymied my Coalition on C8. That game is *probably* lost from a Coalition standpoint, but it will continue to its natural conclusion - they could make a mistake.

However, in that game I think I attacked the Federation too early. I've come to conclude that attacking the Feds on C7 is probably a mistake. But that's just me.

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Quote:

Yeah Ted, I know there are plenty of people willing to play. However, until I finish a game or at least fight it until its obvious one side looses, I can't in good conscious start all over again on turn 1. Plus, its a lot of time. I think it took a year of playing quite a lot to get to turn 12, and I've been kinda busy (and unmotivated) as of late.

Sure you can. Play two games. I'm managing something like 3 active games, and have a total of like 5 in the wings. It's just a matter of priorities.

But if you're unmotivated or too busy because other things have priority, that's something else.

All I'm saying is that talk is cheap. F&E is a highly complex game, and much more dynamic than it first appears. There are too many interacting rules and phenomenon, not to mention player choices, that affects how the game plays out. That's why pointing to a few facts and then drawing general conclusions about the game seldom works for F&E.
Example: When fully ad-hoc CVs were announced and CEDS retrograde eliminated, there were several veteran players who decried these changes as the death of the alliance. That turned out not to be the case.

This game is sufficiently complex you really only get a feel for its overall dynamics after you have played several games, even if they are not complete games.

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**Quote:**

I can't in good conscious start all over again on turn 1.

---

Don't worry about that.

Just play. Learn. That in itself is reward enough for your opponent. I've been watching and playing here for about 10 years. More watching than playing.

And I'll tell you, playing is the thing. Winning and losing aren't that important. They're really not. Learning is important. And you would learn quite a lot by just asking Ted for a copy of his Missed Chances game file starting at the moment of combat on CT3. Play the assault on Kzinti as the Coalition with the 16 PDU that exist in the file, then play that very same assault with only 8 PDU at the capital planet but 22 more Kzinti FF in the capital hex.

You could probably find somebody to do that very short mini-scenario with you, and it would take at most a month.

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**By Eric S. Smith (Badsyntax) On Monday, May 19, 2014 - 02:40 pm:**

Yeah, my priorities don't have time for 3 active games 😔 1 I can probably fit in, but when I did F&E I devoted 100% of my free time to it (which is why I was knocking out utilities, my online SIT, etc at
that same time). Not easy for me to separate out like that.

I do know what you mean about a complex game though. It is the most complex game I've ever played due to the way everything interacts. There is so much finesse involved. Battletech has over 1200 pages of rules (and 6000+ units) and is MUCH simpler. There are many things that may matter in 1 turn, and not so much the next. The ebb and flow of the game is extremely fluid, and fronts are a dozen or more hexes in size.

For example, if you purely look at potential production, the alliance wins, period. If you purely look at economy, again, the alliance wins, period. However, mix those 2 in a game, and the Coalition economy at times surpasses the alliance, and the alliance can't built nearly all of the stuff on the schedule while the coalition has no problem fulfilling their entire schedule along with repairs and new stuff. So when I initially started playing I'd see that economy and think "no way the coalition can win!", but 5 turns later when the Kzinti/Hydran space are all in Coalition hands, the coalition is putting up unmolested colonies everywhere, and that entire dynamic changes.

I still have theories how things will play out, but having only made it to turn 12 once those theories are bound to be proven false in short time.

Course, I also know how a few bad die rolls at key times can make or break the game. Roll 4 1-2's in a row as the defender in a capital assault while the enemy rolls 5-6's and it makes a HUGE difference in how an assault goes. Or how important it is on how you place reserve fleets and how to use retreats as an advantage. I'm still firm in my maulers are overpowered bit, but over 35 turns that early game overpowered ability may end up being necessary for balance issues, though would still have issues with a CA hull outgunning a B10.

I never even faced a B10AA yet, and can't imagine how that is anything but extremely demotivating. Speaking of, morale itself is actually pretty important in play. When you start as alliance and see
everything conquered, entire allies ceasing to exist, it is hard to continually force yourself to accept that things get better.

Maybe in a few months I'll try again.

The B10AA is gross. Two B10AA is sickening, especially in pursuit combat (while they can't use their stasis in pursuit, you're still facing 48 compot plus 4 other ships).

From the Coalition perspective though, by mid game you're fighting CVAs galore and tons and tons and tons of fighters that the Alliance replaces for free - more so than the Coalition. Also demotivating. Also demotivating is the point where you realize you cannot make forward progress any more, and that the game is going to turn into a long slow grind the Alliance will win unless you can somehow hang on until the arbitrary game end turn.

F&E requires patience, a lot of it.

Come on back in if you're ever up for it. But you should have two games if you want to pick ours back up. You really, really need to play from the Coalition perspective to have any decent feeling for the ebb and flow of the game.

F&E easy to learn, tough to master.

I agree with Ted. I do think that the discussions and analysis are very helpful for F&E players, but there is absolutely no substitute for playing the game. I've never played a game of F&E where I haven't learned something.
If you really want to learn F&E, the best way is to play against someone else. Not a solo game, definitely not just reading the rules and thinking about it.

You have to play, and you have to play a flesh and blood opponent.

The last Origins Early Beginnings game I played in had a random event raid where one fleet of ships is randomly generated in your territory to attack you. These raiders are not owned by any other player, they just show up and rampage until you kill them. Another player chooses the ships though. I randomly rolled Klingon, and Bill Stec gave my a Klingon fleet with 2 B10AA's, Maulers, and other heavy hitters. I killed them, but lost many ships in the process.

I found that the game demands so much concentration on my own forces and plans that I only gain an appreciation for the other side when I switch and play the other side. As the Alliance it is easy to get overwhelmed and feel that the Coalition can do anything and the Alliance can do nothing to stop them, but playing the Coalition will demand an immense amount of planning to keep such a large war machine on track and on time. Juggling time constraints, economy, and repair capacity can be very challenging, and when you fail your offensive can come to a grinding halt, even after you have crushed the Hydrans and pushed the Kzinti back to their home system.

Eric

I think you have missed the key point about extra PDU's - which was mentioned.

Example
25 Damage over 4 rounds is the same as 20 Damage over 5 rounds.

In theory 125 Damage over 4 rounds is the same total damage as 100 Damage over 5 rounds.

The key is the self kill level - 100 damage a good Assault force can take - 6 DN's, 2 BC and a Mauler is 102 - leaving say 5 ships uncrippled.

Bumping that up to 125 causes 2 more DN's to be crippled - (or 3 CC's).

What happens if you take 150 damage?

You might be forced to self kill a BC or 2, to ensure your scout and last DN is available for the next round.

Basically - extra PDU's give you the chance of doing so much damage, it forces the enemy to put more cannon fodder on the line - to allow them to maintain a strong line for more than 1 round.

If your facing close to 400 compot just changes the game dynamics - and you don't get that with extra PDU's early on.

Well the coalition would surely use a couple command points in a capital assault...

But yeah Paul, that is a valid point. A 100 vs 150 point fleet could see half a dozen CWs destroyed (well, 1 to depot, +7.5 EP in salvage). So the Coalition would be like -6 or -8 *hulls*, instead of just damage.

However, even with 320 compot on the defender side (meaning 20 PDU's, so +56 EP spent), on average that is only about 104 damage (still hurts, but probably no hulls lost, or maybe a couple frigates or
CWs if a high roll). After just a couple rounds, the damage becomes 60-80 which is far easier to absorb.

So yeah, those first few rounds, vs a LOT of PDUs, sucks hard, but it doesn't last. The Coalition line is also doing like 30 damage a round, 10 of it directed. So basically they take out 4 PDUs, every other round.

Hypothetically:
20 PDUs, 100 point defensive line, SB, 322 compot start
vs
C8, D7C, D7*2, 6*D5, D6M, 18*IFF, 12 DB, 108 compot

Assuming rolls of 4, bir of 5.

Round 01: Coalition -98, Alliance -27 (-20 to take out 3 PDU, 11 Minus Points, 17 PDU Left)
Round 02: Coalition -90, Alliance -16
Round 03: Coalition -90, Alliance -27 (-20 to take out 3 PDU, 11 Minus Points, 14 PDU Left)
Round 04: Coalition -82, Alliance -16
Round 05: Coalition -82, Alliance -27 (-20 to take out 3 PDU, 11 Minus Points, 11 PDU Left)
Round 06: Coalition -74, Alliance -16
Round 07: Coalition -74, Alliance -27 (-20 to take out 3 PDU, 11 Minus Points, 8 PDU Left)
Round 08: Coalition -66, Alliance -16
Round 09: Coalition -66, Alliance -27 (-20 to take out 3 PDU, 11 Minus Points, 5 PDU Left)
Round 10: Coalition -58, Alliance -16
Round 11: Coalition -58, Alliance -27 (-20 to take out 3 PDU, 11 Minus Points, 2 PDU Left)
Round 12: Coalition -50, Alliance -16
Round 13: Coalition -50, Alliance -27 (-10 to take out 2 PDU, 5 more points, no PDU left)

Coalition took 938 Damage (234 could be fighters, if they had that many), Alliance 101. At this point its just the Alliance fleet and SB.
Now, instead of 20, lets do 12 PDUs:
Round 01: Coalition -77, Alliance -27 (-20 to take out 3 PDU, 11 Minus Points, 9 PDU Left)
Round 02: Coalition -69, Alliance -16
Round 03: Coalition -69, Alliance -27 (-20 to take out 3 PDU, 11 Minus Points, 6 PDU Left)
Round 04: Coalition -61, Alliance -16
Round 05: Coalition -61, Alliance -27 (-20 to take out 3 PDU, 11 Minus Points, 3 PDU Left)
Round 06: Coalition -53, Alliance -16
Round 07: Coalition -53, Alliance -27 (-20 to take out 3 PDU, 11 Minus Points, no PDU Left)

Coalition took 443 Damage (126 could be fighters), Alliance 48. Again, at this points its just the Alliance fleet and SB.

So, statistically those 8 PDUs bought 6 more rounds of combat, woot! Excluding fighters it *doubled* the damage output. Roughly 234.5 EP (176 EP with enough fighters) in damage to the Coalition, vs 110.75 (79.25 with fighters).

So, those 8 PDU's cost 56 EP, but dished out another 100 EP in damage to the Coalition...

Now lets add 2 more rounds to the 2nd battle, but with +11 CU's in the line (with a PAL flagship):
Round 08: Coalition -32, Alliance -30 (no EW issues anymore). 5 CU's deestroyed, +3.125 Salvage
Round 09: Coalition -32, Alliance -30 (no EW issues anymore). 5 CU's deestroyed, +3.125 Salvage
Round 10: Coalition -32, Alliance -30 (no EW issues anymore). 5 CU's deestroyed, +3.125 Salvage
Round 11: Coalition -27, Alliance -30 (no EW issues anymore). 5 CU's deestroyed, +3.125 Salvage
Round 12: Coalition -21, Alliance -30 (no EW issues anymore). 2 CU's deestroyed, +1.125 Salvage, 18 damage taken

Granted, surely the SB would be directed on by now, but just for arguments sake.
There are a lot of assumptions in here, like no alliance direction, no coalition direction on the SB, 3 more coalition compot allowing 4 PDUs down per turn, etc, etc.

Assuming max fighters available to coalition:
20 PDU: 704 vs 101
12 PDU: 317 vs 48
22 CUs: 371 vs 66 (as the frigates are treated as 0, but +13.75 EP in salvage)

That is about 80 EP more damage to the Alliance by purchasing the extra 8 PDUs over 22 CU's.

Each CU would have to be in a battle line about 5 times before they were worth it. The extra pinning factors surely help things, but I'm not sure how much.

So ok, those +8 PDUs are worth it for various reasons. Still though, an extra 20 pinning factors of garbage aren't anything to ignore. Plus, with 20 PDUs, a 6 variable and 6 attack roll ends up being 131 damage, but a 1 and 1 is only 57. The die rolls *really* matter in battles that large.

I changed my mind, good job folks ;)

Eric wrote:
>>>Now, instead of 20, lets do 12 PDUs: >>>

(for what it is worth, Capital Planets only start with 8xPDU, not 12).

Right, you got it. Extra PDUs *can be* worth it over hulls - but it depends on the circumstances.
Ted,

With respect to your game with Michael and Richard in which you are having some difficulties, 2 points:

1 - They are a very good team.

2 - As we've already discussed, I think that with the expansions, so many ships were added that expanded F&E is probably pro-Alliance (not meaning of course to take away from Mike and Richard).

Agreed, but I'm doing particularly poorly. I think that has more to do with my strategic decisions rather than tactical ones. I've learned now and will not make the same mistake again.

This is a great discussion, I am learning a lot from it. I normally avoid starting over in learning a game, you usually learn more by just continuing and completing a game. But in this case, I'd like to go to at least turn 15 and I've messed up so many things in these first 5 turns... I am going to start over since the first 5 turns go pretty fast.

I did the capital assault on the Kzinti wrong which made things much easier for the klingons, really messed up turn 4, and then built 38 extra ships the coalition shouldn't have (and other mistakes as well). I also understand the basic flow of things up to turn 6, the first time through I had no idea what I was even trying to do in the long term. So I will learn a lot more by re-doing the first 5 turns.

So I am doing turn 1 econ for the coalition and I can't find a specific rule on this. Can you down-sub carriers? for example the Klingons can build 2 CVS and 1 CVE per turn. If they build no CVS can they build 3 CVE per turn?

I have no interest in D6Vs that can never be upgraded to D6Us:-)
They can build 3FV groups a turn.

D6Vs can have a AD5 and F5E as escorts, making 21 compot. It's not awe inspiring, but it is good enough for a lot of purposes.

D6Vs have 2 uses. FCRs for D7V, D5V, and C8V groups. And flagships for assaulting undefended BATS.

I agree with Richard. Medium carriers are far more useful than escort carriers. Once the better escorts come out, D6V groups are better than Kzinti CVL groups.

I'll use the three they start with that way on the Hydran border after the fleet has left for fed space. I just don't see needing more than three of them.

Getting a lot of FVs built in the first three turns will sustain the big carriers on the line longer, and they are good for any battles against undefended targets like BATS or planets where their 4 fighters will absorb all the damage you are likely to take.

The Klingons seem to start the game with tons of support for front line carriers but no front line carriers to support.

Turtle - don't forget D6Vs become D6Us mid game.

Turtle - don't forget D6Vs become D6Us mid game.
Ted, they don't become D6Us in the base game. As such their value is limited. Granted flexible carrier groups helps them, in my opinion, not as much as it helps the Kzinti CVE for small scale combat and clearing province raiders/holders.

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 08:23 am: Edit

Yeah, the Klingons just build cruddy carriers for the first, what, 4 turns of the game just to use up free fighter factors and absorb the damage they can. Then, once D5Vs and D7Vs come out, they churn those out like there is no tomorrow (in the base game).

I don't know that I would ever build *more* D6Vs early in the game; FVs only carry 1 less fighter factor but the conversion is half as much--for 3xEP, you can convert/construct 3xFV to carry 12xFFF; for 4xEP, you can convert/construct 2xD6V that carry only 10xFFF; the FVs are just as good at feeding fighters forward and/or being used in smaller, second line combat against undefended BATS and the like, but the ones that are already on the map when the war starts do just fine helping kill BATS and getting crippled (absorbing 5 extra free damage) over, like, Kzinti non-homeworld Capital planets.

By Ted Fay (Catwhoeatsphoto) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 10:26 am: Edit

Oh, base game. Yeah, D6Vs stink then.

By Mike Curtis (Nashvillen) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 11:18 am: Edit

Never built beyond the initial number and only used them with FVs to take down BATS. Then, D6Us came along...

So, yes, with the right expansion, you treat them very differently!

By Paul Howard (Raven) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 03:58 pm: Edit

Eric - good to see we persuaded you!

On a point of note though -
Hypothetically:
20 PDUs, 100 point defensive line, SB, 322 compot start
vs
C8, D7C, D7*2, 6*D5, D6M, 18*IFF, 12 DB, 108 compot

Coalition line is probably a bit low for a Capital Assault - easily swop the D7C and D7's for DN's and BC's - so probably another 9 compot.

The IFF's are a double edged sword - good for taking damage - but you will reduce the damage you do (so you could swop the 18 IFF's for say 3 x CC - so another 9 compot - or a combination, to maximise the chance of getting the required damage number - if 120 compot gets you a net 20 damage - and 118 damage only gets you a net 19 damage - you would go for the higher compot!

The Defending line though is massively lower than what it should be.

Assuming it's just basic F&E (although the Coalition line looks like it has 1 ship to many) - the Hydrans should have

1 x PAL 17 - assumes 1 has died etc!
2 x BT 28 (45)
3 x CC's 36 (81)
5 x DG 55 (136)
2 x RN 20 (156).

That's 50% more than the assumed line - and so circa 10 more damage per round is done.

With all the add on rules - the Hydran line gets really evil.

For example, Add a LAV, the FSP and LGE's instead of the the RN's/DG's!!! The Hydrans can get to over 170 compot!
Yes, I view the D6Vs as 3 extra CVTs. My plan is to give the the 3 D6V groups AD5/F5E escorts and use them as the line carriers defending Hydrax. The 4 D5Vs I will have will generally face the Kzinti and the D7Vs and C8Vs can fight the Federation.

On turn 1 I am building the 3rd CV pod set the Klingons can build, and 2 FVs (with no escorts). Then I will build 3 FVs per turn on turns 2 and 3 to add 8 FVs in the first 3 turns. 32 fighters, enough to sustain 2 CVS on the line for almost 3 turns.

I am not building escorst for the FVs, they can use adhoc E4s at first until I replace the escorts on the D6Vs and CVTs, the the FVs will get those E4As. The AD5/F5E escorts for the CVTs are actually spare escorts for the line carriers, they just may as well escort the CVTs until they are needed.

Marc wrote:
>>I am not building escorst for the FVs, they can use adhoc E4s at first until I replace the escorts on the D6Vs and CVTs, the the FVs will get those E4As.>>

There is zero reason to ever build an E4A, even at the .5 EP cost (are you using that cost for light escorts? That was a relatively recent ruling--all light escorts cost .5EP to convert or build instead of 1EP). Just use ad-hoc E4s after you run out of the E4As you have, and by the time it matters, you can instantly construct a million F5Es.

Building FVs till the D5V becomes available in y170 is totally the way to go. I don't know that I'd even bother building the CV pod set--much like the D6V, you are paying 2xEP for the ability to house 5 fighter factors, where an FV is 1xEP for the ability to house 4 fighter factors. And the Klingons usually have something more important for a TG to be doing.

Having scads of FVs for the early part of the war isn't at all bad, and
then once you have D5Vs (or D7Vs a bit later), they make fine fighter back up.

By Eric S. Smith (Badsyntax) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 04:31 pm: Edit

I think it would be possible, with 20 PDUs, and a maxed out Hydran line, with a good die roll (5-6 for both variable and attack), to actually *completely* kill and entire Coalition line.

Anybody ever have that happen?

Surely the Coalition would fall back at that point. It'd be neato if completely elimination of a line prevented directed damage or something, as even if the entire coalition line died it probably wouldn't the next round, and surely not the subsequent rounds after PDUs were depleted.

By Mike Curtis (Nashvillen) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 04:34 pm: Edit

It is impressive with a high number of PDUs on Hydrax and a beefy Hydran line along with a high BIR with a +2 VBIR the amount of damage that can be done.

All the more reason with the Klingons to strike fast and deep on the Hydrans.

By Ted Fay (Catwhoeatsphoto) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 04:59 pm: Edit

Quote:

Surely the Coalition would fall back at that point.

No, not surely. Depends on how many plus points remain. If the Coalition's reserves are deep enough they will just come back for more.

Quote:
It'd be neato if completely elimination of a line prevented directed damage or something, as even if the entire coalition line died it probably wouldn't the next round, and surely not the subsequent rounds after PDUs were depleted.

Similar proposals have been rejected. Just FYI

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 05:03 pm: Edit

I paid 1 point for escorts for most of that first game, that's one of the many mistakes I made the first time around. And yes, I would never build an E4A.

I am going to start a thread in the Reports from the Front section for this next solo learning game so I don't keep posting about it here in general strategy. I can learn a lot more faster if I show you guys what I am doing before I do it and get advice and rules corrections.

By Jason E. Schaff (Jschaff297061) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 05:43 pm: Edit

At Origins I did once see an entire Coalition line almost vaporized while assaulting the Kzinti homeworld. I think the flagship and free scout survived, but that was it. Both sides picked BIR=4 on the first round, VBIR was +2, and the Kzinti rolled a 6. That one round probably saved the Kzinti capital, as it turned out to be a very near-run thing in the end.

By Stewart Frazier (Frazikar2) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 07:37 pm: Edit

Eric, i have, but then I knew going in it could happen...

'Can you do it again?' while putting up a better line...

By Andrew Bruno (Admeeril) on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 - 10:19 pm: Edit

Klingons are highly susceptible to Cat Scratch Fever. Most known cases were originally reported during the Thunder Over Kzintai campaign of the General War. Symptoms include DSF warships
chain exploding like a string of firecrackers when first assaulting the Tigerman Homeworld. This is soon followed by a Klingon bloodlust that keeps them coming back for more until there are no more Kzin within 500 parsecs of initial contact, or lack of functional Klingon vessels to travel said distance.

By Mike Parker (Protagoras) on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 - 10:58 am: Edit

Quote:

I don't know that I'd even bother building the CV pod set--much like the D6V, you are paying 2xEP for the ability to house 5 fighter factors

I actually like the Klingon VP Pods. Once you can upgrade them to the VP+ and get 6 factors its really nice since you don't have to bring the tugs back you just pay the ep and voila. D6V's are less flexible and not a great investment I think although they become the impressive D6U later on. I also like the FV as you point out. Its great for feeding fighters forward which is what the Klingons do for awhile till they get D7V's and CVT+ groups. And then they can still get use as both attrition in backwater battles and/or SSC or be extra albeit expensive FCR factors.

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 - 11:56 am: Edit

Mike wrote:

>>I actually like the Klingon VP Pods. Once you can upgrade them to the VP+ and get 6 factors its really nice since you don't have to bring the tugs back you just pay the ep and voila.>>

All of these are valid points. But Marc and I are talking about just the base game. Where there are no VP+ pods or D6Us.

By Rob Padilla (Zargan) on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 - 01:22 pm: Edit
TGA+VP2's is still a better carrier than the D6V, and the basic Game does have the AD5 and F5E, so there's a decent CV group!

By Marc Michalik (Kavik_Kang) on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 - 03:43 pm: Edit

And one that can magically relocate itself by dropping the pods and having a tug somewhere else pick them up.

By Peter Bakija (Bakija) on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 - 03:52 pm: Edit

There is certainly that advantage to the VP pods, but, generally speaking, it probably won't be significant that often. I'd still (in the basic game) likely just build FVs for the first 4 turns, and if you want super mobile, instantly transportable CV pods, wait for the CVA pods in y175.

By Jeffrey Tiel (Platoaquinas) on Thursday, May 29, 2014 - 11:25 am: Edit

I'm curious about players' impressions of the relative merits of the interdiction carriers over against the heavy fighter carriers, both of which seem to come into the game a few turns before PF's and X-ships. Which do you prefer and why? If you use both, but for different purposes, how best should one employ them?

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Thursday, May 29, 2014 - 03:16 pm: Edit

Well, the interdiction carriers come out before the heavy fighter carriers, so it makes sense to build them when you can. The Klingons absolutely love the D6U, and it makes the D6V a quite valuable long-term unit.

On balance, I think heavy fighters are better, because they are more versatile. They can be fed forward independently as a single squadrons, they aren't limited to only 1 squadron per battle force and the carriers that have them are tend to be a little better.

So, to take an example, the D6U has an attack factor of 3, and 12 fighter factors, giving it a total ComPot of 15. That's pretty good, but the DWB has 3 attack and 8 for the fighters, for total 11. That's
4 less, but the DWB has an EW of 3. Getting 3 EW for only 4 less ComPot is quite a bargain, and being able to put a 3 point scout on the line that is pretty tough to kill is a major selling point. And again, there is actually nothing stopping you from putting 3 DWBs on the line if you want, giving you 24 fighter factors PLUS 9 EW factors. I think I just shuddered.

But really both types of carriers are really useful!

To echo Pete, the D6U for the Klingons is a boon and a reason to build some more D6Vs in the early part of the GW to use up FFF that would otherwise go into F5Vs.

One of the best parts is it is a single over sized squadron of fighters. Yes, you can pair it with a C8V making a CVEG after Turn 24 (318.41) to have three fighter groups, but field 24 fighters.

I believe there is a rule that says only one oversized fighter group per battleforce.

Are heavy fighter squadrons considered oversized?

Alan and John,

Yes, you can only have one oversized squadron per battleforce, and those are the fighter groups for patrol carriers and interdiction carriers.

Heavy fighters are not oversized, so you theoretically can have 3 in a battle force.
For non Feds/Hydrans, this means that the fighter maximum can be 28 factors. One oversized squadron of 12 factors, and 2 heavy squadrons of 8 factors each. Of course mega-fighters can increase the attack value of that even further, but not the defense value.

Mike:

CVEG has has one heavy or medium carrier and one light/escort carrier, so you can't put a D6U in a CVEG with a C8V.

D6U is oversized at 12, the C8V is two squadrons for 12 more, 24 total. Three squadrons.

Sure, but they can't be in a CVEG together. They can certainly be on the same line.

Oops, you are right, so, just give it it's own AD5 and F5E. Still 24 fighters in three squadrons.

Thanks everyone for your advice on the matter of heavy fighter carriers vs interdiction carriers. I hadn't noticed that the D6U converts from the D6V! Thankfully, I know that now.

F&E has lots of hidden nuggets like that. Pour over the SITs for more information, as sometimes allowed conversion are not mentioned in the text rules, but are in the SITs.

The only real way to learn the game is to play against a live veteran opponent. 😊
... he said in a very inviting way...

One follow-up . . . I found the rule where heavy fighter carrier conversions from existing carriers do not count against carrier production limits but are under a one per turn (for usual fighter races) until PF2 intro date at which point they count against PF limits, but I cannot find a rule that discusses the conversion of existing carriers to interdiction carriers, and whether/how that counts against carrier production limits.

Carriers converted to interdiction/patrol carriers count against the carrier production limits. The reason is that number of fighters and fighter factors increase more significantly than those of a carrier to heavy fighter carrier. I think it is in the Q&A archive. You will have to search on the rule for interdiction carriers if I remember correctly.

I have this vague recollection that an exception was made for carriers converted to interdiction carriers. I would need to look through my Captain's Logs.

FEDS would be very interested in seeing such a documented exception.😊

CL 47 for the ruling about carries converted to another type of carrier counting against carrier production. Thus a NVL converted to CVP would be counted as one of two carrier production slots. See
also Kzinti CVL to CVS.

The CVS to CVH only counts against the heavy fighter limit not against carrier production. You could convert a CVS to CVH and still build 2 carriers provided that you had the money to do so.

What about the complete rewrite of the Heavy Fighters rule that was in CL #36? Has that been changed?

See (530.223). Heavy fighters count against the PFT limit or the carrier limit. When heavy fighters first come into play there are no PFs or PFTs so they are produced in a way that essentially adds 1 carrier above and beyond the existing 2 carrier + escort carrier limit.

Ive decided to start playing again and rather than create yet another solo game thread in the Active Games area (which stops before T10), Im only going to post it once I get a fair way in.

However, at T3C the Coalition have sent about 50 to 60 ships (many small, one full line of Lyran, the rest are Klingon), and the Kzinti have probably 40 or 50 ships in defence (having sent 2 Reserves there) - including a LOT of carrier groups.

The SB in 0902 fell last turn, the SB in 1304 fell this turn. The Lyrans dont have many cripples, the Klingons have already got a lot from taking down the SB this turn.

Given the above, is it worthwhile getting pounded and stripping the outer planets, or do I play it safe and fight 1 turn and run away and be happy that enough was done to draw the reserves allowing the SB to fall?
Im thinking T3 construction all goes south to the Hydrans so the first few turns there should go well.

If I play it safe this turn, next turn there will be 100+ ships attacking the Kzinti Capital hex, so I should be able to strip all the outer planets. Then T5 can be the attack on the Capital, or maybe even T6 if I want to be careful.

If I go hard this turn, I can probably strip most of the outer planets, but I will leave with a LOT of crippled ships, and possibly even some destroyed important ships (so far the Kzinti have let damage fall, even on the attacks on SBs, purely to overload repair facilities - I could have taken down a Tug Carrier with Escort, but letting all that damage fall probably costs more in the long run).

In terms of my thinking on direct damage I would take down a capital ship if I could. I would take down any ship if I thought it was only going to be 1 round of combat. Otherwise I think letting it fall and overflowing the repair facilities is the best way to go.

Note: this is using 2K rules, not 2K10. Maybe when the Warbook comes out I will get it, but at the moment Im using 2K, AO, CO, FO.

I don't really know 2K rules. It's worthwhile getting the 2010 rulebook imo, at the very least. Might as well learn what people are using currently.

What you should do at 1401 depends a lot on the actual ships there, not just the number of ships. What PDUs, bases and ships are at 1401.

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As a second suggestion, if you want to get up to speed you might try to find an opponent, a number of people are willing to play PBEM. It can be a much more rewarding experience than playing solo.
There is 3 or 4 Maulers in there. A few Tugs with BP+VP. Quite a few D7, D6, D5, and a few weak carriers. The Lyrans have a solid group for 1 round of combat and can then retreat and make it back to a repair area (Convoy, FRDs, etc.) - which is mainly done to save the Klingons a bit of cash.

The Kzinti have a lot of carriers, a lot of fighters, and a fair few BC and FFK. So they will do a LOT of damage, and there is not a lot of absorbing of damage on the Klingon part.

If the Coalition skip combat this turn, then they will have a lot more fighters they can throw in to the mix on T4.

Playing others:
Being in Australia I suspect it would be a very slow process. Not often could emails flow back-and-forth. Would be more a case of send email and wait for a response overnight.

I use Vassal which also has an in-game chat so if ever there were a time when we were both around the chat can make things much quicker than email.

Ive thought about buying the 2k10 rules, but really was just hoping to get the Warbook.

When I say I have 2k, AO, CO, FO... what I really have is Deluxe + 2k updates, AO, CO, Carrier War.

Maybe if I had an actual opponent to face I would update to 2k10.

Can't advise further on 1401 without knowing what is actually there. A lot of times it IS advisable to go in and strip some PDUs.
Kzinti had over 90 Fighters not including PDUs/SB, Klingons had 30.

Kzinti could potentially go 2 or 3 rounds of Approach and the Coalition would have smaller COMPOTs unless they used Maulers - which would probably be Directed and not even get to attack any planets.

So the Coalition decided to stick their tails between their legs and flee.

By *Stewart Frazier (Frazikar2)* on Monday, June 02, 2014 - 07:11 pm: [Edit]

You could have used the approach battle(s) before deciding...(actually, keep offering the approach until the Kzinti refuses - keep shooting up his fleet)...

By *Richard B. Eitzen (Rbeitzen)* on Monday, June 02, 2014 - 08:03 pm: [Edit]

What are the exact ships present at 1401 at that point?

By *Jason Langdon (Jaspar)* on Monday, June 02, 2014 - 08:45 pm: [Edit]

I moved on from the battle, but could easily go back to an earlier saved game.

The Kzinti had a DN(A), 3xTUG BP/VP+escort, 3xCV Groups, a CVL Group, 3 or 4 CVE Groups, 3 FCR, a TUG VP/VP, TUG SP/SP, LAV, SAV, CC, 4 or 5 BC, 4 or 5 FFK, plus some DD, CL, FF and troop ships, etc. All up about 40 ships.

All up they had around 90 Fighters, plus the Fighters on the SB and on the PDU (only the Capital had PDU upgraded - to

The Coalition had DN, BC, CA, 2 CW, 3 DW, CL, 2 FF from the Lyran, and C8(A), 2xD7C, 4xD6M, 3xTG BP/VP+escort, 4xFV Group, D6V Group, 2xE4R, 4xD7, 4xD6, 4x3F5Q, 5xF5, E4, D6S, D5S, F5S, 2xD6G, D6D and a few other things. All up about 60 ships.
Note these are estimates, but are pretty close. The Coalition had a moderate number more ships, but were WAY down on Fighters.

The Alliance had the potential to put up bigger lines on Approach and maybe burn through half their fighters over 2 rounds, but inflict enough damage to make the planet stripping very expensive.

Stewart, given the Alliance had 3 times as many Fighters, and the ability to repair things next turn and then heading out and attacking all the various pickets, and maybe even having a crack at the Klingon FRD park (which could well be exposed if there are 20 or 25 cripples rather than fresh ships) I can see them actually wanting to fight a lot on Approach. Burn through enough Coalition ships that they not only have a lot of cripples, but don't have enough ships to then go and strip the outer planets.

Assuming you could have kept the Kzinti out of your FRD park, I'd have at least tried a round or two of approach battle and see how that went.

If you can get past that, it would probably have been worth doing some rounds of battle to kill PDUs and let the homeless fighters die, potentially killing PDUs at Vielsalm, Vronkett, and Keevarsh. You should have plenty of capacity to repair cripples at your FRD park, and if you exceed it (or even if you don't) you can use field repair.

If you find getting past approach battles too expensive, at least you (probably) get to kill some escorts. Maybe spend two command points with the Klingons for +1 ship per battle.

The cripples and losing the FRD park was the big challenge.

Also, to really be able to punish the Kzinti on Approach would have taken either Lyran BC or Klingon D6M on the line - and with nearly
100 COMPOT the Kzinti could have been directing.

In return, the Kzinti could have had all carrier groups meaning cripples at best - if directing, or only using up fighters if letting it fall.

I guess using command points for the Coalition could help, but that is 10 EP more in expense - and at most Im there only for a couple of rounds of combat before cripples become too much to handle.

By **Stewart Frazier (Frazikar2)** on Tuesday, June 03, 2014 - 06:58 pm: Edit

Jason, I'm a very agressive player and like lots of dead ships, not to mention that there are times where I will 'bet the fleet' to take a hex.

Plus I know just how much of my fleet I'm willing to lose for the objective...

By **Thomas Mathews (Turtle)** on Thursday, June 05, 2014 - 08:13 am: Edit

This is sort of a one trick pony, but something the Romulans should think about. The SUP is fairly vulnerable unless in the form box against smaller sized fleets. Well on turn 25, they can take advantage of the CVEG rule in a way to rival the Kzinti BCS+CVE carrier combination. SUP+SPB(FHB or NHB) plus various escorts as required. This gives you two legal fighter squadrons on two carriers without having to hold any out. For the third attrition squadron replace the SUP with a TH and you get the PF flotilla added for free with a very tough defensive compot, although you have to wait until Y182 for the TH.

By **Richard B. Eitzen (Rbeitzen)** on Thursday, June 05, 2014 - 01:12 pm: Edit

You can escort the SUP prior to turn 25, so it's not THAT vulnerable.

By **Kevin Howard (Jarawara)** on Thursday, June 05, 2014 - 03:49 pm: Edit
Thomas, the SUP is listed in the SIT as a medium carrier. The CVEG restrictions can only include the main carrier and "one light or escort carrier". The SUP would have to be the main carrier, not the secondary one.

I've been wondering about how to employ the CVEG rules to good effect, given what you all are saying about the smaller carrier having to be an escort/light one. Doesn't the lighter carrier requirement imply that you lose a full squadron of fighters or a PF flotilla at the very time in the war when you really cannot afford to do this? Or is there a way to employ the CVEG effectively? Can you create two CVEGs and the CVE fighters will add up to one squadron?

Jeffrey, see my Tac Note in CL#45. Basically, you use a BCS and CVE to get 2 attrition squadrons, then the third attrition squadron comes from another PFT or CV or even an independent squadron if you want.

Note that the Kzintis, and to some extent Romulans can use the CVEG more effectively than the other empires. In the case of Hydrans you wouldn't as they have tons of hybrid fighters available to them.

Note that (318.432) limits a given battle force to one and only one CVEG group on the line at a time.

In the next F&E game I play, I'm going to use the ground combat rules for the first time. I'm interesting in getting a sense of how to employ ground troops to maximum effect, what little tricks veteran players have learned, and what major pitfalls to avoid. I'm playing coalition. I've seen the D5G ship and understand that its troop pod is detachable for landing on planets but I suppose it can also stay attached to the ship for base assaults.
Read the ground rules carefully. There are a couple of modifiers for ground combat that can change what you plan to do at the beginning of the round. E.g. The VBIR modifier. You probably won't want to try a G attack when the VBIR drops by 2.

The Feds can get 4 G factors on a ship by using a tug with two troop pods. Pretty crazy.

BATS busting might get easier if you have a G-ship in on the round you cripple the base as your G attack will then destroy it (attack can result with a SIDS and a crippled BATS has 1 SIDSs available)...

Don't forget the bonus from an MMG and a Prime Team.

Thanks everyone. What recommendations do you have concerning how to escort the G ships in the battleforce?

There was a discussion last year that if your doing a raid with a 'G' ship to put ships in the raid pool to act as escort's so if the target does any damage it can be placed on the escort(s).

In regular combat I'd say it depends on what the opponent does because the escorts loose all offensive ComPot. That could be a rather hefty price to pay.

I've been studying the rules for a game but have not played in 10 years so lets hope those with more recent experience will chime in.