I've seen several reports of people playing solo games, so I decided to try it. Especially since I'm very new and can't find opponents in my weight class.
I'm wondering how y'all manage movement in this situation. C1 was fairly easy, but for A1 I have decision paralysis when it comes to reaction. Kzintis can move here, and draw the Lyrans into reacted thusly, but the Lyrans know exactly what the Kzintis are planning, so they won't do that. The Kzintis know the Lyrans won't react, so movement over HERE would be better, but then...
etc.
How does one play a solo game of F&E?

You play both sides yourself. It's good for learning very basic tactics and strategy, and for learning the rules.

Right... but how do you make strategic decisions against yourself when you know what you're thinking?

Pretend you don't.

Troy, something I tried once and abandoned (because I had too many time demands) was playing a solo game but asking for input on the BBS. I called it "Ted Against the World".

It was a solo game, but I would report things on the BBS. Because I know I'm skewed to being an Alliance player I would ask for input regarding how people thought the Alliance should behave on the upcoming turn, or sometimes I asked for input on specific
situations.

I got enough input (like one or two guys) that it did help me to not play the Alliance as a total punching bag for the Coalition, and it also made the solo game a bit more interesting.

Maybe that will work for you?

By A. David Merritt (Adm) on Friday, June 30, 2017 - 06:01 pm: Edit

Look at each side separately, yes you know what the Lyrans are doing, but if your opponent was making the same move and you did not know his plans, what would you do?

By Jason E. Schaff (Jschaff297061) on Friday, June 30, 2017 - 08:53 pm: Edit

Something I find to be helpful when solo gaming is to play from both sides of the table. Literally get up and walk around to the other side of the table when changing from playing one side to playing the other. Probably a sign of some sort of insanity, 😊 but I find it does help me play each side "independently".

By Gregory S Flusche (Vandor) on Saturday, July 01, 2017 - 09:50 pm: Edit

I keep reading the battle reports in here and see were so many alliance ships destroyed and a lot of collation ships crippled. When i look it makes no sense. Crippled ships can be repaired and even more ships built. If your ships are being destroyed and his crippled. You will lose i should think. In the long run any way.

Now I know that in F&E you either let the other guy put the damage were he wants are you direct damage were you want it. I also understand that it takes more to direct damage ships then just letting it fall as you say. However would it not be better to kill ships and not allow cripples? Can some one explain this to me and why?

By Ryan Opel (Ryan) on Saturday, July 01, 2017 - 11:36 pm: Edit
The coalition has a bigger ship count to start with and can generate more cripples and still keep ships on the line.

The alliance needs to put cripples on the line and then takes a big risk at losing ships on the pursuit.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) On Sunday, July 02, 2017 - 01:24 am: Edit

Early on the Alliance has to balance causing as much economic disruption as they against losing ships.

When the Coalition attacks a given Alliance hard point they have two or three options. 1, they can let all the damage fall. Not a good option if the alliance has a lot of fighters in the hex. 2, direct on base to prevent the alliance player from soaking all the damage on fighters. 3, direct on an Alliance ship to reduce their pin count more rapidly.

The Alliance players in general tend to let a lot of the damage fall without directing on things. The Coalition does not have a lot of fighters to soak up the damage early on. This does a couple of things. It makes it possible for the Alliance player to overload the Coalition player's repair facilities that are within range of the front lines. It also gives them the opportunity to pursue to kill some of those cripples.

When the Alliance attacks a given Coalition hard point they have to spend their directed damage attack at a 2 to 1 ratio. They have no maulers. So they have a harder time early on when trying to conduct offensive operations.

Not all retreating forces are worth pursuing. If in a given hex you haven't crippled enough ships for there to be only 3 uncrippled ships in the pursuit battle it is a good bet that you would be causing more harm to yourself than the retreating enemy.

Even when you do limit the retreating side to 3 uncrippled ships it is not always in your best interest to pursue. The risk of losing a ship must be balanced against how may enemy ships you could kill.
In my Empires of the Dead game with Bill Steele the dead count is: Alliance: 6 ships, 1 Tg Pod, 14 BATS, and 1 SB. The Coalition count is: 22 ships, 3 BATS, 2 PDUs in a turn and a half. The Hydrans have directed 2 Lyran and 1 LDR CL out of existence to keep them from coming back as BCs.

In my Wild Wild West game the Klingons have lost more total ships than the entire Alliance combined. That doesn't include the Lyran or Romulan loses. I know the Kzintis haven't done much directing in the Wild Wild West game. Yet the Klingons have directed 3 complete Kzinti CVS groups into oblivion.

So make of it what you want.

Another thing to keep in mind is that some of the games use CEDS, e.g. Wild Wild West, and some don't, e.g. Empires of the Dead. In games without CEDS escort management becomes a very different animal than games using the old CEDS rules.

Ok so the fighters used by the alliance force the coalition to direct damage. Are kill nothing but fighters while they lose ships. Having maulers helps over come the 2:1 ratio. The alliance lets the damage fall as it does make more sense to do as much damage to the enemy fleet as possible. Then Kill them in the pursuit battle.

Also by looking at my very old copy of the F&E rule book. The Alliance is outnumbered early on. So losing bases rather then ships may be better. I think I am getting a understanding here. thank You for your answers,

2 other factors that will affect the dynamics of a given game are:
1. Your opponent(s). If you play against the same person or people all the time they have a chance of picking up on your tendencies and changing their strategy to them.

2. Die roll luck. The die rolls can have an impact in any given battle. Yes, they should average out over the course of a given game. However, if you are like Paul Howard and continuously have die rolls that leave a large gap between you and your opponent or give you results that are 1 less than what you need to kill a key unit or otherwise save you a turn of combat at a fixed location then you have to adjust for that.

One thing I have discovered and learned since I started playing with and against a larger pool of people is new ways of doing things that are more efficient and how to vary my directed damage attacks as an alliance player to keep my opponent(s) off guard.

If you haven't gotten the F&E compendiums I would suggest you do so. The Tactical Notes sections from each Captain's Log have some very useful tips and suggestions regardless of which side you prefer to play.

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Penal Ships Tactical Question:

I'm curious about the Honor Duel option for the Klingon Penal Ships. What immediately comes to mind is using them against FRDs (nope), outer carrier escorts (nope), tugs setting up bases (nope), SWACS (oh please . . . nope), so . . . what do you all use them for? I found a tac note that was very helpful in suggesting their use in targeting enemy crippled ships, especially in a pursuit battle. But any other suggestions?

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A scout* in the battle force that is not in the free scout position. While most Alliance fleets won't have enough scouts early on to do something like that if a scout appears then it might be a good
choice. If you get lucky enough to cripple it then it is 1 to 4 EW points less you have to face in the battle hex. Plus you might get the opportunity to kill it in the pursuit battle.

* Scout in this context means any ship with special sensors to include Drone Ships, Survey Ships, and standard scouts.

It's a bit of a limited case, but Monitors also make a pretty good Honor Duel target. Due to their low defense, the penal ship has a pretty good chance of hanging a casualty on one.

Kzinti BCs and CCs because they can be converted to carriers which makes them harder to kill. Hydran RNs and DGs because they can be converted to CVs and LBs.

If playing solo and really unsure, set up an Active game thread and ask questions there. People can weigh in and then you choose the best option.

Sooooo . . . in our General War game T25, the Federation just attempted to oust the Klingons from their fortifications on Pacifica. All eleven PDUs were destroyed and four SIDS steps were scored on the SBX before the Federation player decided enough was enough. Feds lost 4xDNH, 6xCVA, 8xCX, 2xFTL, FTS, 3xSC, 36xNCL, 9xDW, 18xCL, 55xFF, 2xCC, 2xNCA, CAD, 2xDNL, 2xCA, 13xNCA, 5xDWA, 5xFFE, 15xDE, 2xTG+AP destroyed. He calculated his salvage from the battle at 293.15EP. Fed player wishes to point out that he crippled a Klingon B11AA. Alliance surrendered.
To be fair, what did the Coalition lose??

A DX, a B11AA crippled, an FRD+P, and a bunch of fighters and PFs, as well as the defenses mentioned.

Coalition forces included a big battleforce with 3 Battleships, X ships, as well as Lyran DNHPs and Romulan SUP. For defenses the Coalition had 3xPTR, Klingon SBXAAPP, 3xOPB (co-located and offering a bit of support), FRD, FRX+P, and 12xFRD+P (Klingon and Lyran).

We learned that PFs are incredibly destructive against late war alliance assaults on fixed defenses. PDUs with a half flotilla of PFs forced immense and multiple soak off rounds to clean up the minus points, all the while the Coalition was spreading 100-180 points of damage a round and killing nearly everything in the line. Adding a PF module to anything capable of fielding it proved decisive.

Strategically, the Alliance capitals were already either captured or surrounded, the Tholian Holdfast had just been captured, and the Coalition ships were heading north to overpin the Feds in their capital. So, the game was pretty much over and the Fed player decided to roll the dice, and, incorrectly recalling the Battle of the Bulge, yelled "Nuts!" before launching his all out assault.

That's HORRIFIC casualties. Yeah, that's a game ender right there...

Am I wrong in thinking you could just fight a round at one of the co-located OPBs to work off the minus points, avoiding the SBX and PDU guns (and especially their associated attrition units, as well as
the FRD attrition units)? Not that that would mean victory, but it would certainly be closer.

By James Lowry (Rindis) on Saturday, November 18, 2017 - 01:42 pm: Edit

You're mostly right. All the other bases would only contribute 1/2 ComPot and EW, which is a big help. And all but one base's fighters/PFs would count under the three squadron limit (which really punts out most of them), but the defender gets to pick which base gets all its attrition units; it doesn't have to be the base you're fighting at (so the Coalition would always pick the SBX's here).

Presumably, the Alliance was picking the SBX as the focus normally to limit the OPBs to half ComPot and EW while restricting any PF flotillas on them....

By Paul Howard (Raven) on Sunday, November 19, 2017 - 04:44 am: Edit

Multi Base Hex battles are....complex.

Under 302.2122 and 302.2123 surely the Alliance could have attacked the 2 OPB's (assuming the third was excluded) as unless the FRD's were at the OPB - they FRD's would have been ignored and the SBX/Other OPB's would have been at half strength.

This would allow 2 OPB's to be at least killed 'cheaply'.

Attacking a SBX with that level of support does seem to be suicidal though.

If you have to attack such a location - killing the PDU's is clearly the priority target - but would have killing the FRX+P and then FRD+P next helped?

By Sam Benner (Nucaranlaeg) on Sunday, November 19, 2017 - 08:51 am: Edit

Way I see it, it's not about killing the OPBs. Actually, were I the Coalition I'd probably take damage on the OPBs to remove this option. Because they're all in the same system (It's not like a capital
hex), the minus points are all carried from one battle to another. So you direct 4 PDUs, leaving a whole heap of minus points. Then you go to an OPB and fight a round where you do no damage, but you're also not taking nearly as much. While the OPBs do add a little damage, it's probably not worth having them there.

PDUs provide firesupport and attrition units regardless of the base being designated as the primary target.

No, they just provide the attrition factors. PDU ComPot is only counted if you're fighting the 'near' base, see (302.2123D).

Given PDU ComPot vs attrition factors, it's not a big consolation, but we're talking about shaving down the pain a bit, and that sadly just comes down to reducing the effectiveness of the SBX, the biggest single unit there. And the FRDs are inevitably going to be there, so it keeps their squadrons out too.

The SFU powers-that-be have systematically eliminated all the other possibilities where you could boomerang back and forth between two locations to burn off large PDU minus points. I wonder if the co-located bases are an oversight or a deliberate choice, and if the latter, what the reason would be for permitting the soak off rounds. For a defender it means a serious re-assessment about the wisdom of building a co-located base.

I think anything that makes co-located bases less appealing is a good thing.