



FEDERATION COMMANDER



COMMUNIQUE #3 STARDATE 2006.03

NEW SHIP

Our new ship for this issue is the Federation Destroyer, part of the original series of ships done by Franz Joseph Designs upon which the entire Star Fleet Universe was based. This ship and the other Franz Joseph ships are expected to become part of a future booster pack.

Also in this issue are revised ship cards for the Klingon C7. There were more mistakes on the C7 card than all other cards combined, so we have taken the step of including the correct version here. New C7 cards have been printed (and the old C7 cards thrown out). All copies of Federation Commander shipped after 1 March had the updated C7 in them. Also, the first shipments of Booster #2 that we shipped to stores include this replacement card. Anyone who bought a copy of Federation Commander with the old version of the C7 can have the new one for the asking (either shipped with an order or for the cost of postage). Contact Sales@starfleetgames.com if you want one. You can quickly tell the two cards apart by checking the disruptor arcs, which should be L+FH and FH+R on both sides.

SCHEDULE UPDATE

We shipped *Boosters #1, #2, and #3* on 6 March. This was a one week delay because *Border Box #1* (24 pewter starships for \$99.95) sold three times the expected numbers and we had to get more ships made before we could ship these products.

We expect to ship *Booster #0* on 27 March. *Booster Zero* is the Intelligence File with ships and rules from six new empires: the Romulans, Gorns, Lyrans, Hydrans, ISC, and the WYN Star Cluster. (We originally planned to ship this on 13 March but the wholesalers said they did not want a major new release during the industry trade show held that same week.)

We expect to ship *Klingon Attack, Squadron Box #4, Squadron Box #5, and Squadron Box #6* on 27 March. Many players (including veterans of our other game, *Star Fleet Battles*, are looking forward to the new Klingon D5W, Kzinti NCA, and Tholian DD miniatures scheduled for inclusion in those boxes.

We expect to release *Romulan Border* at Origins.

REVISION-3 RULEBOOK RELEASED

You can obtain the latest revision of the rulebook for \$3 plus postage on our shopping cart:

http://www.starfleetstore.com/MERCHANT2/merchant.mv?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=S&Product_Code=4001-2

The rulebook is priced (as a spare part) at \$10, but you can get the "trade-in" price (without actually trading anything in) by using "special instructions" to tell us that you are upgrading a rulebook you bought. This trade-in offer is (obviously) available only to people who bought the game (or a rulebook) in the first place. You need to either have bought the game from us (tell us this so we can confirm you actually bought a rulebook in the first place) or give us the complete name, address, and phone number of the store where you bought it.

CONTINUALLY IMPROVING SHIP CARDS

Whenever we get a good idea for an improvement to the ship cards, we will use it, and if turns out to be a bad idea, we'll stop using it. While we won't be offering free replacements of older ship cards if we think of a better way to do ship cards, we will add the improvements during reprints and if that happens maybe we'll think of some kind of "trade in" system.

Paul Grogan from the UK suggested that on ships with the +10 +20 power track system we should include a written note on the "starting power when not damaged" and these notes have been added to the 16 ships on Sheet C (these ships will all go into *Klingon Attack*); this will also be used on ships from this summer's *Romulan Border/Attack* products.

Several other players suggested that we number the warp boxes on the ship cards to make counting easier and we're going to try that on a future ship card print run. See the ship cards in this issue of *Communique*.

QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

With the recent release of the Revision-3 rulebook, we don't have any rules updates for this issue. There is, however, a growing controversy over the Federation FFG frigate, which some regard as too powerful. While identical to the well-balanced ship in SFB, two rules changes (no "housekeeping" power and 1/4 movement cost) have combined to make this ship unusually powerful in *Federation Commander*.

We ask our players to test this ship in combat, both in duels and in larger battles, and let us know the results. If you, too, feel it is "too good" then the two choices are:

- Raise the point value to 100. Some think that this would be wrong in larger battles where more ships can fire on the FFG and its problems (if any) are self-correcting.
- Change the movement cost to 3/8. To help you test this, we have provided a revised ship card in this issue.

THE BBS: KEYS TO COMMUNICATION

The BBS (www.starfleetgames.com/discus) can be confusing at first sight, as it has hundreds of topics, used daily by a thousand players. Registration is free, but we do require all participants to use their real names. (This not only improves the overall tone of civility, but makes sure you get credit for any suggestions you make.) When you register, you will see topics for each of our product lines. Feel free to venture into the broader universe as you get more comfortable with the system.

PUBLISHER'S INFORMATION

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Basic Tactics For **FEDERATION COMMANDER**

Senior Captain Steven P Petrick

Federation Commander is a new game, not just *Star Fleet Battles* with 97% of the rules missing. Things simply *do not work the same*, and the many differences large and small add up to a very different tactical environment.

The biggest change is in power. First, even in the squadron scale ships (mostly identical to *SFB* ships), you have more power than you did in *SFB* because there is no “housekeeping” cost. (To simplify the rules, the designer made fire control, life support, and shields free.) There is also no electronic warfare, which consumes up to six points on an *SFB* ship. All of this allows more power to hack and slash your opponent’s ship.

There is no “quarter turn delay” over turn breaks, but there is a sort of delay built into the system, since there is an action impulse every fourth movement sub-pulse. After firing at the end of Turn #1, the target has up to four sub-pulses in which it can try something to get out of your gunsights before you can fire again.

SFB players might grasp the concept more clearly if it is explained as follows: the 32 *SFB* impulses are grouped into eight *Federation Commander* impulses. During each of those impulses you can fire (tractor, lab, transport, whatever) once, but you might move up to four times. There are only four “baseline speeds” (zero, eight, sixteen, twenty-four) but during every one of those eight impulses, you could pay one point of power (well, technically, power equal to one hex of movement) to move an extra hex, or you could pay points of power to cancel any or all of the individual points of movement provided by your baseline speed (even movement points you just bought!).

You spend all of your power (other than “baseline speed” and arming photons) on an “as needed” basis, so everything is (effectively) reserve power, with a couple of caveats.

The biggest of those is that you can only use as much power to reinforce a shield as you have batteries (but you can do that for every volley). With the inability to massively reinforce a shield (and the “leak” that happens when a volley of 10 or more points doesn’t penetrate), relatively smaller volleys are going to score internal damage. Due to the way the DAC works, single internal leak points will probably not take out a truly critical weapon, but could affect a warp engine or a phaser (or two) early in the battle.

Leak damage is countered by the repair systems. In *SFB* your repairs are limited, while in *Federation Commander*, they are unlimited and cost no energy. If you have just lost four hull boxes, and nothing else, there is simply no reason not to repair them at the end of the turn (assuming a Damage Control Rating of four, typical of a cruiser in squadron scale). In *SFB*, you would not want to waste your repairs (a cruiser has four, total, for the whole scenario) on mere hull boxes. Which brings up another point — damage control does not have to be planned at the start of the turn (except for shields) but is something you do at the end of the turn. Since you will have damage control points again at the end of next turn, there is no reason not to fix those hull boxes and have them available for “padding”. Repair costs are lower in *Federation Commander*. It costs 10 repair points to fix one box of a warp engine in *SFB*, but only 3 repair points in *Federation Commander*. A typical (squadron scale) cruiser could repair one power system (battery, warp box, impulse box) or weapon (phaser, photon, drone rack) every turn.

While drones are much more limited, the repair system is now used to reload drone racks by “repairing” them. (If a rack is destroyed, you have to “repair” it first, and then “reload” it

later, but each costs one turn of a squadron-scale cruiser’s repair points.) This means that your supply of drones is virtually unlimited (those crazy engineers are running the replicator overtime), although there are a lot of other limitations on drones. Drones are all speed 24 (no faster, no slower), there are no special warheads, there are no “heavy” drones or “dog-fight” drones, and of course there are no ECM drones. There are other limits. Only the ship that launches a drone can control it, as there are no transfers of control (not even for the *Kzintis*) and no drones are self-guiding. But that’s not the big thing. The big thing is that while drones can still do a high energy turn (*Federation Commander* does not use any acronyms including HET), there are three differences: they can only make such a turn if doing so will make them hit their target, they *must* do so if doing so will make them hit their target, and worst of all, they *move on the same impulse that they make the high energy turn*. All of this brings the famous “Zimdars Dipsy Doodle” tactic to a crashing stop.

The strange thing about drones is that they “impact” during Movement but do not “Hit” until after the target gets a chance to stop them during the Defensive Fire Phase. During that phase, almost every ship has a sort of limited aegis rig (a multi-layered defense). First, if it has an anti-drone, it can fire one shot at one drone. After knowing the result, the ship can allocate some or all of its phasers to fire at drones which have “impacted” during the previous movement sub-pulses. If all of the phasers miss (or you didn’t fire any), you still have one last chance to stop the drone, by using a tractor beam (which costs a point of power). Doing this is dangerous, although it would allow you to target the drone with a phaser during a later Defensive Fire Phase. If the tractor beam is destroyed during a later Offensive Fire Phase (or Defensive Fire Phase for that matter), the drone it was holding hits *immediately* with no further counter-measures. Other ships cannot target a drone that has “impacted” (even if held in a tractor) since it is too close to the ship. You can still be overwhelmed by a drone wave using standard *SFB* tactics. Launch drones late on one turn and follow them, adding more drones early on the next turn; this is easy in *Federation Commander* as there is no quarter-turn delay in using the same drone rack. Defense tactics are easier in *Federation Commander* since you can count the drones and don’t have to worry that one of them may be armored or double-size and you know exactly how many points it takes to kill each one of them.

The Klingons are subtly different in *Federation Commander*. There is no mutiny (a plus) but the security stations are no longer there to absorb damage. The various disruptor charges are all merged into one chart that even the Tholians and *Kzintis* use, so there is no UIM.

One difference between *Federation Commander* and *SFB* is the maximum range (25 hexes) for all weapons. While nobody accomplished much firing at 30 hexes in *SFB*, it was always an option. Smaller disruptor-armed ships still have the original limits, but the D6 technically gained a couple of hexes.

On the plus side, all ships include (most of) the various refits that were added to them over the years *SFB* has been in play, so the D7 has three phaser-1s in its nose, the Fed CA has those two RH phaser-1s and the type-G drone rack, etc. The big difference is that the Y175 refit does not exist, and all drone racks (except the Federation Type-Gs) hold only four drones and can launch one drone a turn (no type-C drone racks). The type-G in *Federation Commander* has two drones and four anti-drones, and can operate in only one of those modes during any given turn.

Tractor beams are very, very different. While tractor, negative tractor, and auctions still work the same, tractors are limited to a range of one. If two ships are tractor linked, the one applying more power moves both of them and the other ship’s

engines are ignored. Only two ships can be in a tractor link; a third ship trying to “cut in” will break the previous link (or fail to get its own). Of course, you can still tractor as many non-ship units as you have unused tractors.

SFB players will need a few games (and a few embarrassing defeats) to realize all of the differences between the two game systems. Until then, watch your back and don’t run out of power.

FEDERATION COMMANDER MORE TACTICS

Managing Power

Ensign Daniel Zimmerman, USS Louisiana

In *Federation Commander*, speed is important but so is maneuverability. A captain who wants to go speed 24 has two options; plot a baseline speed of 24 or plot a baseline speed of 16 and use a point of acceleration each impulse.

It would seem obvious that plotting 16 and paying the acceleration costs is preferable as this gives you the lower turn mode. There are risks, however, in such a doctrine.

The greatest risk is that by leaving some of your “speed money” unspent but promised, you run the risk of having to (or deciding to) spend it for something else during the turn, forcing you to the lower speed. (Once you pay for a baseline speed of 24, nothing can slow you down.) There is also the risk that if you need to go 25, you cannot get there from a baseline speed of 16 (but you can from a baseline speed of 24).

It comes down to discipline. If you can stick to a budget and save those eight points of power, you can get a better turn mode (which for some ships is a *much* better turn mode). If you fritter away that power (a point here, and point there) you won’t have the speed that your entire tactical plan depended on. Of course, some unexpected dangers and unexpected opportunities may tempt you to spend those points, and there are times that you should. The great risk, however, is in not thinking through what you are doing. It may seem a no-brainer to spend a point of power to kill (or tractor) a drone and keep your shield intact, but if using that power means no acceleration in the last impulse or two for the turn, it may mean that you start the next turn within overload range of a very upset opponent.

Suicide Solution

Senior Lieutenant Seth Iniguez, USS Colorado

Once you are in close overload range, it is unlikely that your ship will have the power to launch an effective suicide shuttle, and your shuttle bay will be exposed to internal damage from enemy weapons. Go ahead and launch a shuttle or two on the first turn, before decisively engaging the enemy. Although it will be some time before the shuttle gets into range, this will probably happen once the enemy has slowed down to overload weapons and has power system damage. Your tractor beam can be a constant threat, forcing the enemy to either reserve enough power to fight a tractor auction, or hold two phasers in reserve to shoot down the incoming suicide shuttle.

Lucky 13

Lieutenant Commander Warren Taylor, USS Georgia

When selecting weapons to fire, the most effective “packets of destruction” involve 13 points of internal damage. While there is no real “Mizia Effect” in *Federation Commander*, the first three columns of the DAC are usually the good stuff, particularly on Row #6 (the row selected if you order “target weapons array!”). By applying internal damage in groups of “ten plus a few” you can concentrate (to some extent) on this more interesting column. This can be particularly important later in

the game when many of his shields are down or weak and it is less difficult to fine-tune your damage output. As noted, this is particularly important when “targeting weapons” because you have only a 50% chance of getting Row 6, but 13 (really 12-15) damage points will give you two chances of doing so (and a 25% chance of doing it twice). Those first three Row 6 hits are all weapons, and are the whole point of using that kind of targeting. If you can’t get 13 points of internal damage, see if you can score 3 points twice, which has the same effect.

This “Loophole” May Become a Noose

by Cadet Patrick Doyle, USS Ohio

The most obvious (and tempting) tactic is to pay for a baseline speed of 8 during Energy Allocation, then at the beginning of each impulse accelerate to a speed of 8+1. (The alternative is to pay for 16 and then use 16+1 every impulse.) For all practical purposes, you move at a speed of 16 (for the turn), while enjoying the turn mode of a ship at a speed of eight. Sounds great! You should be able to outmaneuver anyone, right?

Well if that’s the loophole, here is the noose. Your opponent, having seen your clever trick on previous turns, can quickly close that noose. If he guesses correctly that you are going to do a baseline speed of 8, then all he has to do is plot (secretly of course) a baseline speed of 16 during Energy Allocation.

Even if at the beginning of all eight impulses you accelerate to 8+1, you are still considered slower than a ship at speed 16 (see the updates). Thus the ship moving 8+1 will move first, and the ship moving at speed 16 will have the advantage of moving second. Despite the less favorable turn mode, the speed 16 ship may be able to better position himself for a kill-blow (or at least avoid yours).

In this game, the Simultaneous Decision Rule (“Me too!”) will allow your opponent to decide when to accelerate, and when not to, depending on what you do. This applies to acceleration done at the beginning of the impulse, but not in the selection of the baseline speed during Energy Allocation. So any time you decide on 8+1, he can remain at 16 (or accelerate to 16+1 for additional maneuverability), and you (at 8+1) will always move first regardless of what he does. In this game, having the initiative (moving last) is important to winning. To quote the old fighter pilots: “speed is life”.

The above “term papers” were published in *Captain’s Log #32*. Amarillo Design Bureau Inc., *Captain’s Log*, and the Star Fleet Universe have a long tradition of publishing tactics devised by players. You are invited to send in your own tactics for possible publication in *Captain’s Log*.

COMING
THIS
SUMMER!

FEDERATION
COMMANDER:
ROMULAN
BORDER



FEDERATION COMMANDER SCENARIO

(8Z3C) THE MIGHTY HOOD GOES DOWN

On 2 August, 2571, the Klingon Empire invaded the Federation, expanding the Second Four Powers War into what became known as The General War. This day “lived in infamy” as “Day One”.

Hundreds of Klingon ships stormed across the border in a massive invasion including four entire fleets (Northeast Fleet, East Fleet, Southeast Fleet, and Tholian Border Harassment Squadron). Ships from these fleets targeted border patrols, starbases, battle stations, colony planets, convoys, and the ships of the Federation Third Fleet.

Three Klingon cruisers were specifically assigned to assassinate the Federation Heavy Cruiser *USS Hood*. One of the most powerful units on the Klingon-Federation border, the *Hood* had to be destroyed if the Klingon invasion was to be successful. Sending three cruisers was something of an overkill, but the Klingons wanted to be sure that they could dispatch the *Hood* quickly and without getting any of their own ships seriously damaged.

To those without military experience, the *Hood* seemed to have an easy escape: just point the bow at the nearest starbase and accelerate to full speed; even if the Klingons gave chase, any battle would take place on the Federation’s terms. But war is a complicated situation, and *Hood* had to stand her ground against the Klingons long enough for a much slower convoy (which was evacuating essential personnel) to escape.

(8Z3C1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Two, the Federation player (commanding the *Hood*) and the Klingon player (commanding the cruisers D7 *Challenger*, D6 *Bloodshedder*, and D6 *Desolation*).

(8Z3C2) INITIAL SET UP

Set up the map in any convenient configuration in either scale. Place a Class M planet in the upper right hand corner, two hexes from the top and right edges of the map.

Place the *Hood* in any hex of the Federation player’s choice adjacent to the planet.

If using the large-hex map, place the three Klingon cruisers in hexes along the left edge of the map within four hexes of the bottom edge of the map. If using the small scale map, place the Klingons 25 hexes from the *Hood*, generally in Direction E from the *Hood*.

The scenario is written for a “location map” around the planet. The map can “float” in any direction as long as the planet remains on the map.

(8Z3C3) OBJECTIVE

Mission-Federation: Remain on the map for ten turns so the convoy has time to escape. If you leave the map before the end of the tenth turn, you have suffered

a defeat and will be removed from command as a coward because the Klingons will destroy the critical convoy of evacuees. Those personnel are critical to the Federation war effort.

Mission-Klingon: Destroy the *Hood*.

Time Limit: This scenario has no time limit.

Victory: For the Klingons, destroy the *Hood* and you win a victory! It’s that simple. However...

- If one of your ships is crippled, you win a less impressive “tactical victory”.
- If two of your ships are crippled, you have achieved only a “marginal” victory.
- If all three of your ships are crippled or any one of your ships is destroyed, you have achieved a “draw”.
- Anything worse is a *Defeat*. If one of your ships is captured, it is a *Humiliating Defeat*.
- If you capture the *Hood*, your level of victory is increased by one (a marginal victory becomes a tactical victory). If you capture the *Hood* and none of your ships is crippled or destroyed, you win an *Astounding Victory* and will be promoted.

For the Federation, the captain of the *Hood* need only remain on the map for 10 turns and then disengage by leaving the map to win a *Tactical Victory*. Compare this tactical victory to the level of Victory that the Klingons achieved to determine an overall winner.

For tournament play, use the *Standard Victory Conditions* but give the Federation 10 bonus points for every turn after the first five that his ship remains undestroyed and 50 bonus points if his ship escapes on turn #11.

(8Z3C4) SPECIAL RULES

None.

(8Z3C5) FORCE DYNAMICS

Players can experiment with the basic scenario format by any of the following:

- Replace the *Hood* with the heavy battlecruiser *Kirov*.
- Replace one of the Klingon cruisers with an F5 frigate or with a D7C command cruiser.
- Replace one side or the other with equivalent ships from the Kzinti Hegemony. (Both the Federation and the Klingons fought the Hegemony at various times.)
- Replace all four cruisers with frigates.
- Reverse the situation and have three Federation cruisers attack one Klingon Cruiser.

ORGANIZED LEAGUE PLAY

This scenario will be the first used in Organized League Play. (We may adjust the number of turns that the *Hood* has to stay on the map prior to the start of OLP. Selected playtest groups are currently verifying where the balance point lies.)

KLINGON C7 HEAVY BATTLECRUISER

SQUADRON SCALE

COUNTER
POINT VALUE: 192
DAMAGE CONTROL: 6

IKV _____
Name _____



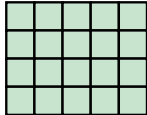
POWER TRACK

Power when undamaged: **+50**
44 + 7.

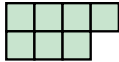
PROBES



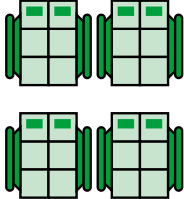
MARINES



FRAME DAMAGE



SHUTTLECRAFT



TURN MODE C
MOVE COST 1

BASE SPEED 8
TURN MODE 2
SPEED COST 8

BASE SPEED 16
TURN MODE 3
SPEED COST 16

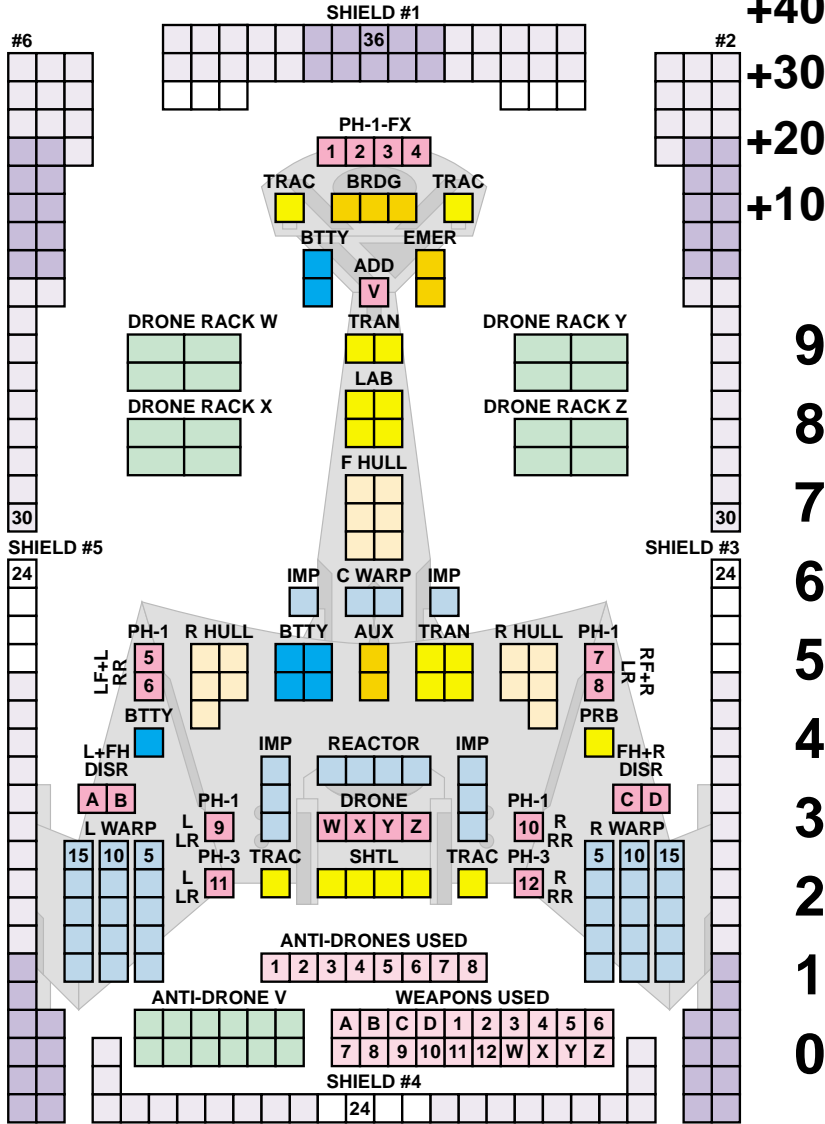
BASE SPEED 24
TURN MODE 5
SPEED COST 24

ACCELERATION
COST 1

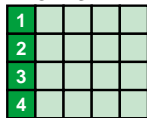
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COST 1

HIGH ENERGY
TURN COST 5

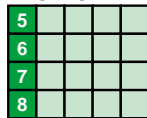
EVASIVE
MANEUVER
COST 6



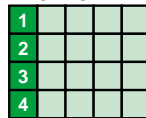
DRONES



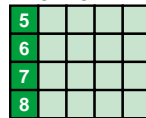
DRONES



DRONES



DRONES



10

FEDERATION COMMANDER: KLINGON BORDER
SQUADRON SCALE SHIP CARD #10 OF 16
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FRACTIONAL POWER
0 1/2

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FEDERATION COMMANDER

Organized Play League Begins in April!

The concept of an Organized Play League (something used by many other game systems and companies) is to encourage players to go to their store and play *Federation Commander* in public on a consistent basis. This will both publicize the game (good for the store and for ADB Inc.) and help you find new opponents. Many former *Star Fleet Battles* players drop into game stores from time to time, and if they see somebody playing *Federation Commander* they are likely to join in. This is why Organized Play Leagues are held only in stores (not in private homes) and why so much of it is geared to involve and energize the retailers.

To make an Organized Play League work, ADB Inc. needs to provide two things: something to do, and a reason for doing it.

ORGANIZED LEAGUE CAMPAIGN SCENARIOS

Every month, starting in April 2006, ADB Inc. will issue a new campaign scenario. All across America and the rest of the world, players will meet in stores to play the scenario and will then report their results through a special input script the *Commander's Circle*. ADB Inc. will then compile the results and, if the Klingons win that scenario more than 50% of the time, a hex on the Master Campaign Map in the *Commander's Circle* will be colored black to reflect that the Klingons have captured it. If the Federation wins, the hex will be colored blue. The Klingon objective is to build a chain of black hexes all the way to Earth; the Federation objective is to build a wall of blue hexes which prevent this from happening.

REWARDS FOR PLAY

The first reward will be that all of the victorious commanders will be listed in the *Commander's Circle*. Further rewards will be handled through the stores and will come in three (or more) varieties. Whenever the players at a given store complete the requirements for a "reward packet", one will be sent to the store and the store manager (or someone he picks as the Campaign Coordinator) will pass out the rewards to the successful commanders.

The requirements for a reward packet are to have at least six players play the designated scenario, to have players play a minimum of six games, and to have *Federation Commander* being played in the store (using the OPL scenario or any other) for a minimum of four hours. Note that you don't have to have all six people there at the same time, just sometime during the day.

The scenario will be designated prior to the first day of the given month. (For example, the scenario for April is in the March issue of *Communique*.) Games must be played during the designated month and reported by the 10th of the following month (that is, 10 May for *The Mighty Hood Goes Down*).

One reward will be a new ship card from a future product, allowing you to get a preview of this ship (or fly a ship nobody else can fly for the time being). Some of these will be prototype cards created in limited quantities (a year or more before the real production card is in a product) while others will be production cards that have not yet been released.

Another reward will be "player bonus cards" allowing a player to have a bonus in a limited number of future games. This might include a legendary weapons officer, extra marines, or a special maneuver. Some cards may also include unique weapons that won't be added to the game system in any other way.

The third and most prestigious of the awards (given one to a store each cycle) will be cloisonne pins for heroic medals which you can wear forever to display your tactical skill. We will start having these in the summer.

YOUR STORE MUST REGISTER

To have organized play, your store must register (in March) as having *Federation Commander* regularly in stock and on-site gaming. This can be done by Email (just send us the name, address, phone number, and manager's name for your store) or through a special script soon to be available in the *Commander's Circle*. The store manager can register his store or you can do it for him (just be sure to tell the store manager you did). Your store will be added to our retailer location system (and will be listed in *Captain's Log* so other players can find it). We will need the name of the store manager (or a regular employee he designates as the point of contact) and an Email address and phone number. There will be a requirement for a minimum number of games and players to get rewards.

FEDERATION COMMANDER ON LINE

The folks at *Star Fleet Battles On-Line* report that they are in the final phases of testing the new system to allow on-line real-time live-opponent combat using *Federation Commander*.