

# STAR FLEET BATTLE FORCE

The most-asked question about *Star Fleet Battle Force* is: "When is the second deck going to be printed?"

We don't know for sure, but we want it to be this year. There are several factors involved in this schedule. One of them is that the first box hasn't achieved full market penetration yet. With so many games being sent to press every month, stores have only a few seconds to review each new product. One of the more common responses to a wholesaler telling a store about *Star Fleet Battle Force* is for the store manager to stop listening before he gets the fourth word, and to assume that anything that starts with *Star Fleet Battle...* must be incredibly complicated, an old product, and of no real interest to him or his customers. We know this is true due to several factors, such as a hundred conversations with store managers at the GAMA trade show in March, all of whom insisted that they had never heard of *Star Fleet Battle Force* and would have carried it had they heard.

Another problem is that there is only so much time and money and there are a lot of projects and products we want to do. And given the market penetration limits of *SFBF-1*, there are just a lot of better bets for the resources available.

We are working to solve this. A new series of advertisements about *SFBF* in trade journals, not to mention our efforts at GAMA, has brought in a lot of new business. If that continues, *SFBF-2* could move from "wish we could" to "we simply must" do this product and as quickly as possible.

There are two things you can do to speed up *SFBF-2*. One of these is to take *SFBF* to your store and play it, recruiting new players in the process. Another is to help us test some new rules, cards, and concepts that might be included in *SFBF-2*. Such as ...

## NEW SHIPS

We released cards for the Federation Kirov-class and Klingon C7-class heavy battlecruisers. These are "not real cards" but simple cardstock, but they do have the actual art. We have been giving these away for free in mail orders for months. You can send a stamped-self-addressed envelope or two IRCs for them if you want them but don't buy our products by mail order.

It has been suggested that we provide a number of "carrier escort" cards, and that you cannot attack a carrier unless all escorts have been eliminated.

Another obviously-missing class of ships is the venerable scout. This ship, having fewer weapons than its half-sisters, would provide ECM and ECCM to other ships (at least, as long as it stays alive in combat).

Other classes such as minesweepers and PF tenders might be better handled by special action cards.

## NEW RULE: TERRAIN

One major new rule being considered for *SFBF-2* is the use of "terrain" cards. These would be action cards and would be played during your turn, taking the place of a formation change. The card would remain in front of your fleet until your next turn, when it would be discarded at the time of your formation change. No, you cannot use a second formation change to stay inside the terrain.

**Asteroids:** Anyone shooting at you, and anyone you shoot at, has a penalty of two ECM points (which basically reduces the value of all attack cards by two points). Tholian ships cannot be attacked at all when covered by an asteroid card, but can attack at the prescribed penalty.

**Dust Clouds:** Same as Asteroids, but only one point of ECM and no special benefit for the Tholians.

**Nebula:** No fighter attacks can be made into or from this terrain type. Wild Weasels cannot be used by a race hiding in a nebula. Webs and cloaks cannot be used by ships in a nebula.

**Radiation Zone:** Only short-range combat is possible.

Thanks to David Kass, Ken Humphreys, Andy Palmer, and Robert Herneson for their suggestions regarding terrain cards.

## NEW CARDS

Several new cards have been suggested, and sound like they could be useful additions to the game.

**Supply Raid:** Play this as a regular attack on an opponent. You can then look at all of his reserve cards and take one of them into your hand, or force him to discard two of them.—*Vince Weibert*

**Economic Exhaustion:** Play this card in place of an attack. Everyone has to discard all of their Reserve Cards (face up, for all to see what they were). Reshuffle the deck.—*Matthew Curry*

**Andromedan Intruder:** Somewhat like the Space Dragon card, this "ship" is played in the center of the table, and everyone *must* fire one weapons card at it. (If you do not have a weapons card, you must expose your entire hand to prove this. You can use a weapons card from the Reserve.) If the Andromedan is not destroyed (by a number damage points equal to four times the number of players) as a result of these attacks, it destroys the weakest ship from all players.—*Anthony Trevellian*

**T-Bomb:** This card destroys one incoming drone card; if that card was doubled by a scatter-pack then both the drone card and the scatter-pack card are removed. Alternatively, playing this card as part of an attack exposes one cloaked ship. If under attack by fighters, play this card and roll one die; the number on the die is the number of fighters destroyed.—*Vince Weibert*

**Black Hole:** Play this card in place of a regular attack, and all enemy ships in the main body are pulled forward into the screen.—*David Kass*

**Tractor Beam:** On defense, this removes any one drone card. As part of an attack, this doubles the effect of any one drone or plasma card (unless blocked by an enemy tractor card); a given card cannot be doubled more than one time in a given attack.

## DESIGN CONCEPTS

We definitely want the two decks to be combinable, but we also want each deck to work on its own. (Some want *SFBF2* to require *SFBF1*, which would simplify some design concepts.) It is fairly obvious to add the Hydrans, ISC, and Lyrans, but the problem is that their unusual weapons would be "too rare" in the deck. One option would be to make the ESG a weapon that didn't require a card, the PPD a function of a plasma-F card, and to (see CL#25) use other cards for the Hydran weapons.

Several players have suggested specific cards, or a new category of cards, which have to be played immediately when drawn. The problem is that there is no way to enforce this rule, and somebody who drew such a card might (by cheating) simply keep it in his hand until he finds a better use for it, then by a little card shuffling it becomes the card that he just drew. It would be possible to mark the back of such cards, but you would know when it was on top of the draw pile that it was up next and might decide to draw from your reserve rather than taking that card. Absent a good solution for these problems, we'll just keep this idea on file.

## ON-LINE GAMING

We are currently negotiating a deal that (if it happens) would bring *Star Fleet Battle Force* to the realm of on-line gaming. This particular web site charges 25¢ to play a game against several live opponents. If this deal works and the game site proves popular, we may provide the site with many new cards that it is not practical to actually print. Those "must play" cards that don't work in a real deck could be handled by the computer, which would keep everyone honest about them. If this deal materializes, we will have announcements on the web site and a link to the site.