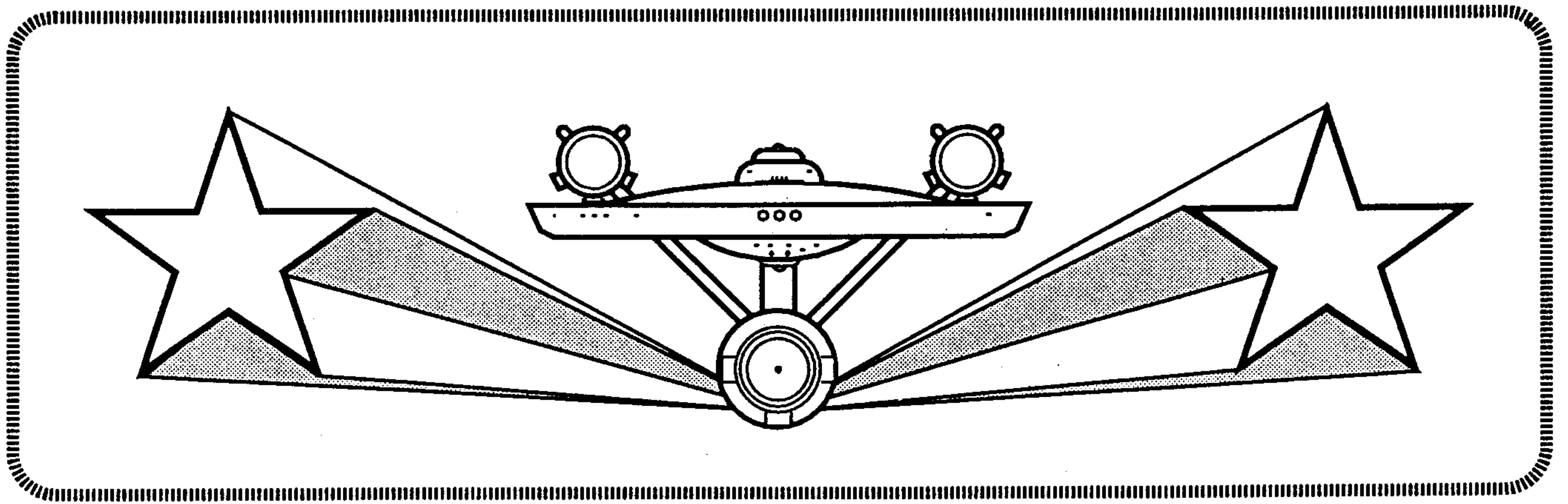
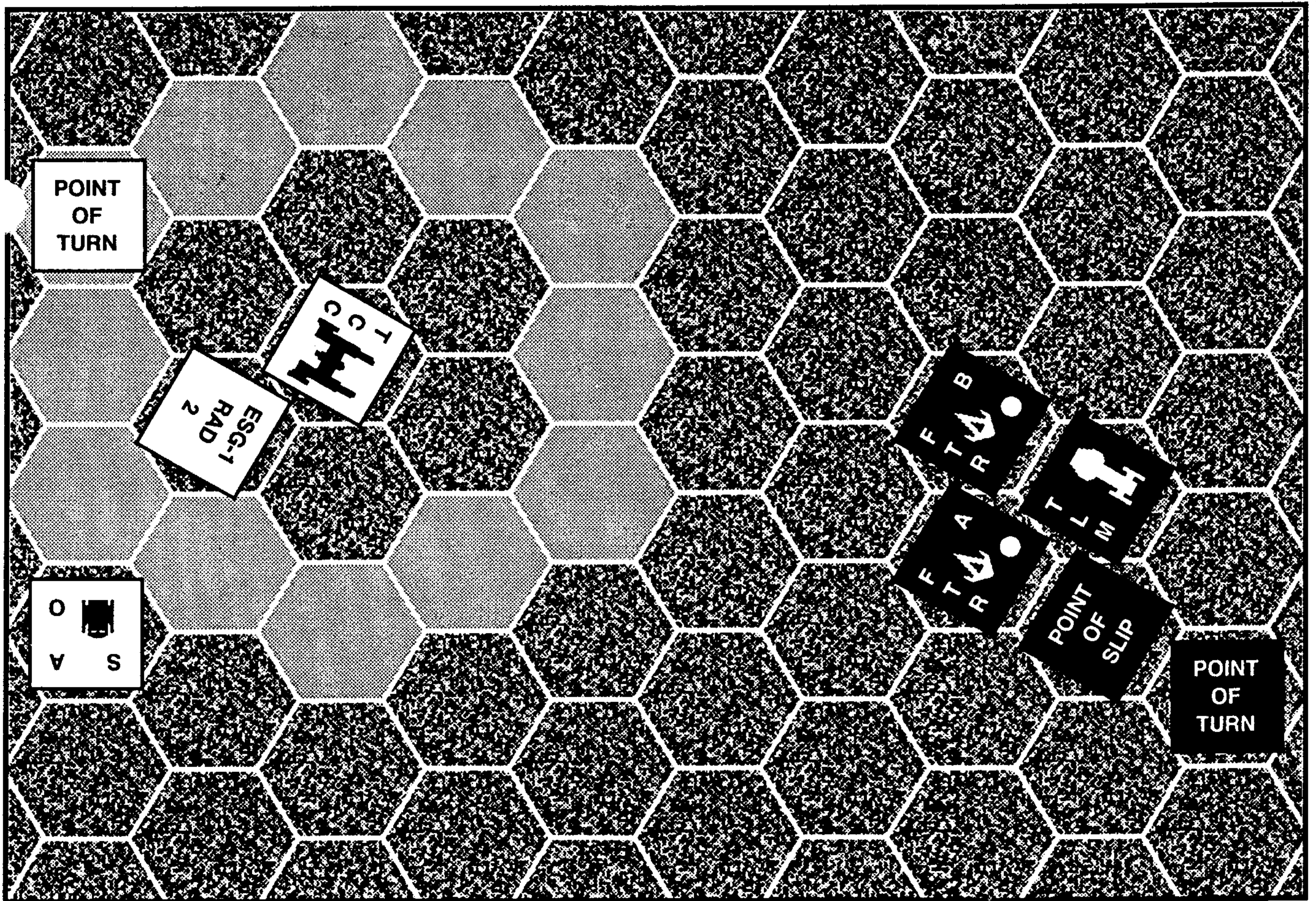


STAR FLEET BATTLES



TOURNAMENT TACTICS



Here comes lunch! — The Lyran Commander

Pilots, do your Duty! — The Hydran Commander

MODULE D2

TASK FORCE GAMES

TOURNAMENT TACTICS

When the Captain's Edition Tactics Manual was released at Genghis Con in Denver in Feb 92, one of the players in the SFB Tournament read the Gorn section and then accosted TFG Vice President Tim Olsen: "See here," he said, "this is obviously written for an open map. What do I do in the tournament on a fixed map with a barrier?"

Fortunately, we had an answer for him (this "tournament tactics" manual was already into final editing), but his question did point out a key fact:

Tournament tactics are unique, and standard patrol combat tactics will get you killed if you don't adapt them to the special rules in use during the tournament.

This book is here to tell you how to do that.

HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE

The 1991 Tournament Book was published as an interim product until the complete Module T could be prepared. One element of the planned Module T was to be a discussion of tournament ships and tactics. The original plan was to assign staff officers to write the various sections, but it was ultimately decided to throw the project open to a wider field of contributors.

The original plan was to print Module T in 1992 and include this material, the original 1991 Tournament Book, and other material (special scenarios, articles on tournament organization, additional tournament SSDs, etc.), but it was ultimately decided to leave that for 1993.

This left the material generated on the ships for use in Module T in limbo. To publish it now meant doing it as a separate product. To hold it for the 1993 Module T meant leaving "hot" material on the back burner for 12 months.

TFG President John Olsen came up with a creative solution: Publish it as a "D Module" without extensive editing, allowing us to accumulate more material and responses to these articles for the 1993 project.

TOURNAMENT TACTICS BOOK ORGANIZATION

Basically, the book is divided into 12 chapters, one for each of the tournament cruisers. Within each of these chapters, various persons (some aces, some staffers, some unrated players) have made their comments (each in their own style), anything from short items on a single point to comprehensive articles to long rambling dissertations. In some cases there are replies, and even lively debates on some points. If some points are repeated by different people, those are the key points (and bear repetition). If two writers provide contradictory views on a key point, you will live or die by your choice between them.

Tactics are like noses; everyone has one, some smell better.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Players are invited to comment on the articles in this book and to write additional material. We will consider those comments and materials for inclusion in an expanded and revised version that may be part of Module T, or we might let this one stand and do another separate manual. Type your comments on one side of 8.5x11" paper. Dot matrix is Ok. Put your name, address, and the date on every page. Comments on material in this book should be marked "Comment on (race) article by (name) on page (#)." New material should be marked as such.

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COMMON TERMS

- Crunch power: Ability to penetrate a shield in one shot.
- Fleet Captain: An Origins national champion.
- Race Commander: Senior member of Star Fleet Staff.
- Rated Ace: A finalist at Origins or winner of a sanctioned event certified by ADB.
- Reload turn: Ships with multi-turn weapons usually pull out of action on the non-firing turns to reload the weapons.
- Shotgunner: Plasma ship that uses plasma shotguns frequently.
- Star Fleet Staff: One of the test and evaluation officers.
- Weasel: Slow down and launch a wild weasel shuttle.

FEDERATION TACTICS

FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

I have noticed many Fed tournament players fully overload their torpedoes on turn 1. This, in my opinion, is not the most efficient tactic. When I have used the ship, I have generally overloaded each of them to strength 14. This costs 10 points of energy on turn 1 (instead of 14 for full overloads). That leaves me extra energy for speed (which is very important, as we all know), and I don't consider the 14-point overload to be much worse than the 16 point (and the 14 pointers can all become 16 pointers with reserve warp). Also, the power of the photon torpedo tends to keep your opponent away from your ship. Against various opposing ships you end up in a 'fire second' position. You can't just dump your photons (the opponent is not likely to get closer than range 6), or your opponent is free to run you down. You must wait until your opponent expends his offensive effort (unless you manage to get to a good range, such as 4 or less) and hopefully turns away. A photon shot at range 6-8 against a rear shield is acceptable.

PAUL PUNDY

Overall, the Fed is one of the most balanced ships in the tournament. It has lots of phasers with good arcs. It is able to bring at least six phaser-1s to bear in any part of the FH arc and directly to the rear. It has incredible firepower, being able to strip shields and cause massive internal damage in one volley. Nobody can argue the lack of a deterrent. Who wants to get caught in overload range? The trick with this ship is to save your firepower for one good shot while protecting your #1 shield. You might have to wait and hold the torpedoes.

Against direct-fire ships, you should load full overloads and play for the center of the board at the end of the turn. This will allow you to chase and cut off an opponent heading for corners.

Always protect your #1 shield. This ship is almost useless if it can't chase somebody down.

Avoid firing at ranges 6-8. You will only cause 10-15 internals and might not live for a second volley. Range 4 is good; you will have a solid chance of hitting with three photons, plus your phaser-1s become very effective.

If you can avoid firing until the second turn, all of a sudden your ship will become very power efficient. Holding four overloaded photons costs only eight points, housekeeping another four. What can you do with 26 points of power? Overrun! If you have been successful in playing for the center of the board on the first turn, this shouldn't be much of a problem.

Against plasma ships, I like some more speed on the first turn. Try to hold two overloads, overload one photon, and hold one standard. This gives you 24 points for speed and WWs.

REPLY TO PAUL PUNDY BY RATED ACE STEVE PETRICK: You should note that the Federation NEEDS to be recycling his batteries (as, indeed, every tourney ship needs to be, at least to some extent [the Andro is a little different]). Therefore, to take your speed of 26, the Energy Allocation should consist (assuming no damage) of: Drain five points from the batteries and use this, plus three points of impulse, to hold the photons. Use the four points of AWR to operate shields, fire control, and life support. Allocate five points of warp power to the batteries to gain reserve warp (alternatively, slow to speed 25 and contingently allocate one point of warp to an HET, placing four points of warp and one point of impulse into the batteries for reserve power because of the advantage of having an impulse TAC after an emergency deceleration), then use the remaining 25 points of warp and one point of impulse to move speed 26.

The point is to have that ability to do an HET if you need to. You apparently also do not consider it necessary to have a wild weasel ready, and I am NOT disputing this, merely asking if you had considered that this also means you do not have power available to be holding a suicide shuttle or two either. Your speed on subsequent turns will reveal to your opponent, if he is tracking your power curves, that none of your shuttles are prepared for special missions. This means that, if you get into position where you might have been able to threaten him with a shuttle, he will KNOW that it is only a mobile phaser-3 platform, and even if it enters his hex, it has to wait eight impulses from the impulse you launched it to shoot. This creates another advantage for speed 25 and a contingent allocation to an HET. The fact that he cannot track that missing point will force him to consider that you have at least one shuttle ready for a special mission. Bear in mind, of course, that he CAN use labs to detect if a shuttle is manned or not, so the decision to use dummy shuttles to draw his fire, sacrificing their use as a phaser-3 platform, may have to be made. Finally, while speed is life in SFB, turn modes are also important. Speed 26 is two increments into the Fed TCC's last and worst turn mode. It might be better to go speed 24 and have a slightly better turn mode. At the very least, careful planning as to when to do mid-turn speed changes could minimize the effect of a faulty turn mode, but remember if you are going faster than speed 26 (only if you use a point of impulse to go speed 26, otherwise the restriction kicks in if you are going faster than speed 25), you cannot do an HET.

Finally, by allocating power to reserve warp, you gain the ability to also do mid-turn speed changes and/or tactical maneuvers (the latter only if you do an emergency deceleration, which even I would advise against).

REPLY TO STEVE PETRICK BY PAUL PUNDY: I agree with your concern for a lack of a WW. Your remaining points after charging photons and housekeeping on the first turn should be spent on movement and miscellaneous things (SS, WW, TRAC, Reinforcement) depending on the opponent. It is always a good idea to put at least one point into miscellaneous power because it makes your energy allocation much harder to track.

Speed 26 vs. speed 24: I like speed 26 because often my opponents travel at speed 24; with the slight speed increase, I gain the advantage of moving after my opponent moves for that impulse. Granted you lose your five-hex turn mode, but with the increase in speed, it should take you just a little longer to turn. Although your turn mode is now 6, you are moving faster to achieve that turn mode.

FLEET CAPTAIN TOM CARROLL

I agree with Frank Gilson and Paul Pundy about not fully overloading all photons. Like Paul, I prefer to have three 16-point overloads and one eight-point standard. The standard I can overload with reserve warp when needed or take as a damage point if I take internals. What is nice about only putting 10 points towards the photons on turn 1 is that the Fed can fly at a pretty fast speed. For fear tactics, there's nothing like a speed-31 (later part of turn 1) Fed Cruiser coming right at you.

The greatest weakness of the Fed is also its strong point: the photon. Even at range 4, it has a pretty lousy hit chance for a two-turn weapon. I've taken a range-4 shot(s) from the Fed and still have beaten it. In fact, I often allow the range 6-8 shot, hoping for an average roll. Of course, if three or four photons hit, 48 to 64 points of damage plus phasers will really hurt. It's just a matter of the luck of the dice beyond range 1, more so than of all the other heavy weapons.

P.S. Rated Ace Fed players Don Clarke and Ed Slusarek do extremely well overloading all photons on turn 1, so maybe there is something to it.

KEN BURNSIDE AND KEVIN GARCIA

1. Never, ever, *EVER* plot a speed of lower than 12 in the Fed TC. You need the ability to jump your speed up a bracket or two far more than you need full overloads. If you can do both, fine!

2. Arm a suicide shuttle. This should take a priority over arming a WW. In *ALL* tournament ships, the ability to damage your opponent is *FAR* more important than being able to avoid being damaged yourself. This is perhaps the biggest difference between actual play and tournament play.

3. Never fire more than two photons at range 6-8. The chances of missing are too high, and you'll need something to keep him away if you miss.

4. Always put at least one, and better yet two, points of power into tractor beams on any turn you intend to get into overload range.

5. If given the choice, fire after your opponent has turned. This opens opportunity fire for you. Also, try and have your turn mode fulfilled before you fire, and an impulse of movement scheduled for the impulse after.

6. Hoard your turns, and use your sideslips aggressively. Your overwhelming firepower will often force your opponent into moving to react to you, even if he does have a better turn mode.

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

The Federation ship is perhaps the most predictable of the tournament cruisers. Everyone you face *KNOWS* you will overload and *KNOWS* you will be trying to achieve range 8 or closer so that you can fire them effectively. So, using this assumption, you will have some idea of what your opponent is going to try to do. Use this to your advantage. Keep an open mind and consider using proximity-fuzed or standard-armed photons, especially against a cloak-equipped opponent who you suspect will fade out before you can reach range 8.

The other problem the Federation ship has is luck, that is, the luck of the photon dice. How many times have you heard of a battle with the Fed described as "He got range 8 and missed with everything, and I won" or the alternative "He got range 8 and hit with everything, and I lost." Neither of these possibilities are all that likely (each has only a 1-in-16 chance), but playing the Federation ship is still something like playing a slot machine — there's always the chance you'll be a big winner or a big loser.

The key, then, is to minimize the effect of the dice on your chances of victory. This is hard to do, but there are some things you might try. First, against a slow-moving opponent, try to get to range 4 or even range 2. The Hydran will let you do this, but you'll probably be sorry. The plasma ships would equally appreciate your willing approach. What I'm talking about here are the disruptor races who have to pay to arm their weapons (and hence move slower) AND have weapons that won't crush you as you move in close.

Also, keep in mind that you have as many phaser-1s as any other tournament cruiser (eight of them), and six will bear on any target in your FH arc at any time (unlike some other ships). If your opponent won't give you range 8, your phasers can still be effective weapons as they do an average of one point of damage at ranges 9-15. If nothing else, you can use them to snipe at long-range targets such as weak or down shields, scatter-packs, and Hydran fighters. Just remember that these good phaser arcs can also be a disadvantage, making you vulnerable to the Mizia tactic.

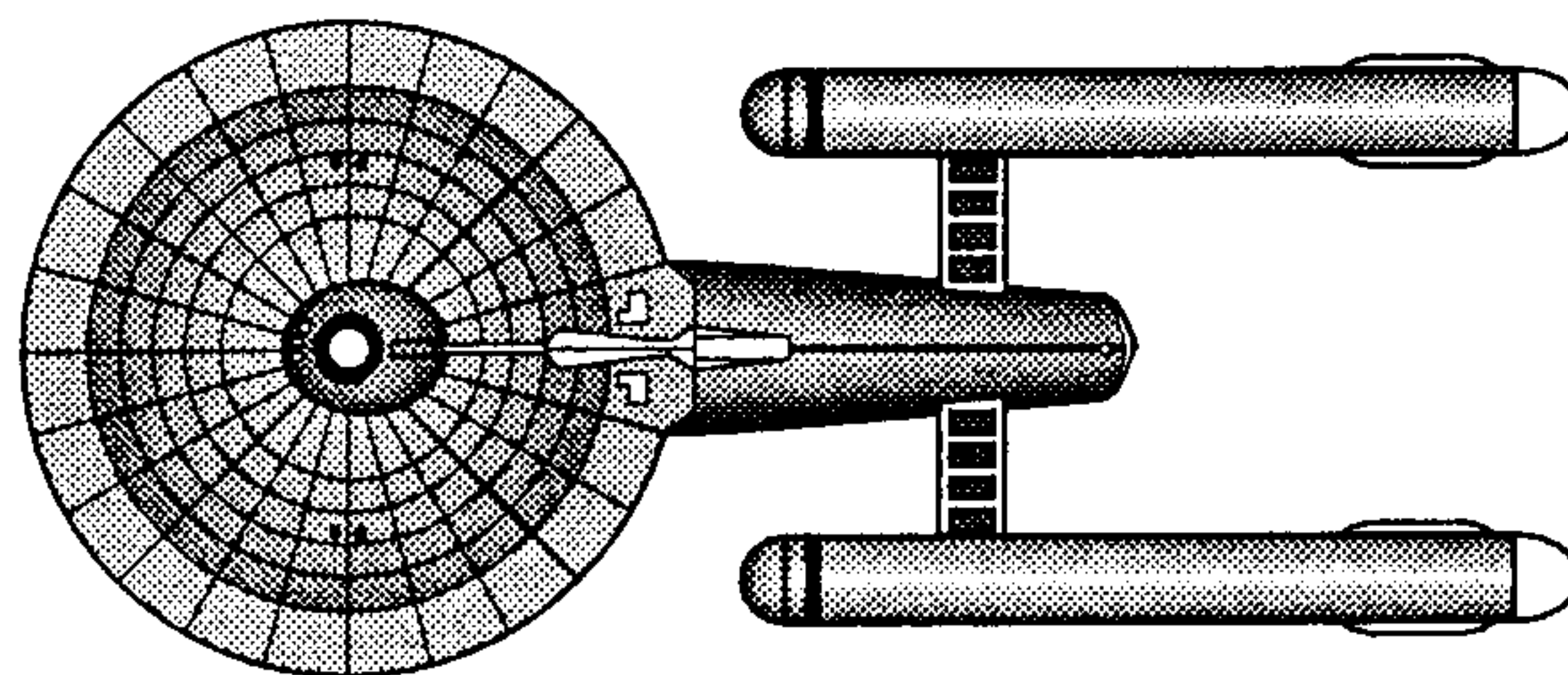
Then there's the alternating photon strategy, which is seldom seen in practice because of the lure of the alpha strike. It goes something like this: When you achieve range 8, fire only two photons and some or all of your phasers. If both torpedoes hit, you get internals and force him to turn away. If one of two hits, you

have crushed a shield for later exploitation (and done as much damage as four normal-load disruptors would do). And if none hit, you'll run away as usual, but at least there's the threat of your two photons to keep him at bay, plus the cost to fully rearm yourself will be reduced. This tactic is rarely used and is not of much help against certain opponents (e.g., the Andromedan), but if used properly, it can be very effective.

Here are the advantages and disadvantages of the Fed.

Advantages: Very good array of phasers, large number of labs for seeking weapon identification, large amount of forward hull to protect the batteries, and the chance of hitting the jackpot with your photons (which makes a great deterrent).

Disadvantages: Internals from any angle can kill up to four phaser-1s (making the ship vulnerable to Mizia fire), poor turn mode, lack of aft hull to protect the impulse drive, and the chance of missing with all your photons.



MICHAEL VINARCIK

These tactics were used against me by a Fed tourney player:

Consider firing only two tubes a turn. This keeps a "ready threat" available to deter overruns. (I was taking lots of shield damage from eight-point torpedoes and had my maneuver strictly limited.) You will force disruptor-armed opponents to stay away, can maintain a higher speed, and put your superior phaser armament to good use.

Use mid-turn speed changes. Unwary disruptor-armed opponents (or anybody else for that matter) that skirt the range brackets can be caught off-guard by a sudden surge of acceleration late in the turn. The Fed has sufficient "crush" power to make this type of set-up effective.

REPLY TO MICHAEL VINARCIK BY STEVE COLE: Firing two photons per turn means that when you get a good shot you have only half your firepower, and consequently when he wants to go head-to-head he only faces two of your photons. The 2/2 tactic seems more appropriate when you are being outmaneuvered and have lost control of the action. Might work very well against a frigate, who can't face two photons.

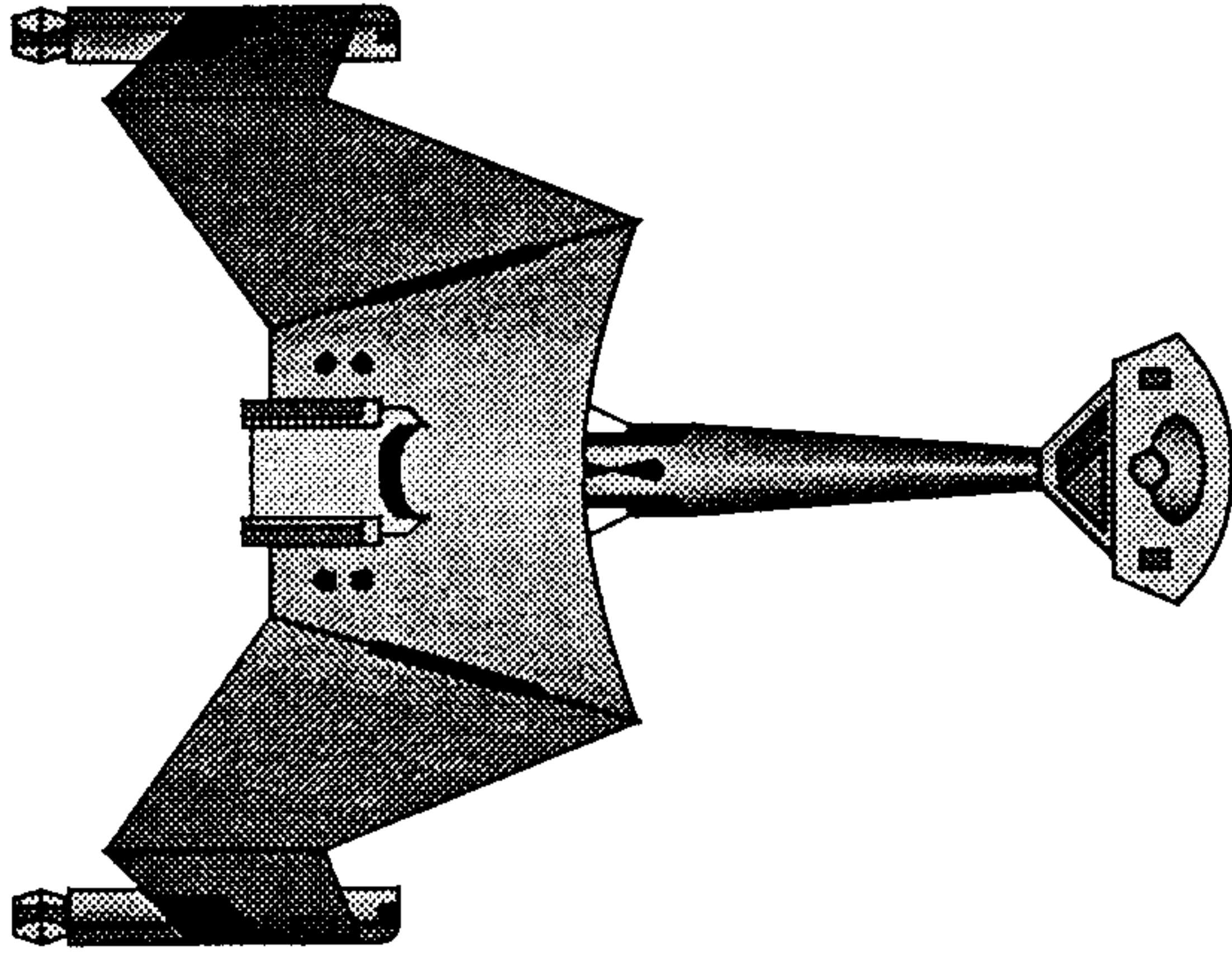
REPLY TO MICHAEL VINARCIK BY TOM CARROLL: I also have problems with the "only two photon shot" myself. If you're in good range, fire all of them. If not, don't fire the photons unless you can assure yourself of rearming. I mean, if a Fed fired only two photons and his phasers at me, I'd turn towards him and be down his throat in the next few impulses, making his life miserable.

The Fed cannot waste his initial overload shot on such antics because the power to rearm those puppies is very restrictive on his movement. Granted, overloading most or all of the photons will give your opponent an edge in energy allocation as he knows fairly well what you can do, but it also gives you an advantage as he knows what YOU CAN DO within range 8.

KLINGON TACTICS

Critical factors to consider for the Klingon tournament ship:

1. Scatter-pack.
2. Scatter-pack.
3. Scatter-pack.—*Ardak Kumerian*



KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

Klingon TC tactics revolve around timing more than any single other point. The Klingon cannot generate enough damage on any single turn to gain a decisive edge. While a plasma-chucker can sit on his torps and chase you down to a corner and mug you, the Klingon (and to a lesser extent the Kzinti, Lyran, and Neo-Tholian) have to fight every turn of the battle.

The advantage of maneuverability over 2/3 of the other TCs enables a Klingon or Neo-Tholian player to take control of the timing of a round. If you lose this advantage by getting cornered, weaseling, or plotting a low speed at the *wrong* time, you'll get clobbered. Against the Neo-Tholians and Orions, you have far superior firing arcs to work with.

In general, have one suicide shuttle and your scatter-pack (SP) armed at the beginning of the battle, and start arming your WW on turn 1. The bare minimum opening speed plot to consider is a 15-21 split, done so that you either move on impulses 15, 16, & 17 (for speeding up) or so that you move on impulses 16, 17, & 18. Being able to move on those three impulses will let you decide when and where to fight.

DISRUPTOR TACTICS

The UIM module lets you do some amusing things:

- Very long-range sniping. At a range of 22, you have about a 50% chance of killing an admin shuttle which, if you're facing a Kzinti or another Klingon, is probably a scatter-pack.
- Sub-hunting a cloaked ship becomes plausible since the UIM overcomes a huge range shift. If you can get to *any* kind of overload range on a vessel fading in or out, you can bloody his nose for him.
- Power saving. It's statistically more efficient to arm three overloaded UIM disruptors than to arm two overloaded and two standard loaded disruptors if you're in overload range at all.

Good targets to shoot disruptors at:

1. Shuttles at a range of 22 or less. At a range of 15, three standard-load disruptors should do the trick, with a 50% chance to kill it. Within overload range, you have an 83% chance to kill with *one* disruptor.
2. Fighters. At range 11-15, you have a 25% chance of crippling a Stinger-2 with four standard disruptors, about a 6% chance of killing it outright, and a 38% chance of leaving it as meat for a long-range phaser-2 shot to cripple. If your Hydran opponent likes to tow his fighters into combat, time your fire so that you hit the fighters on an impulse before he moves, causing

him to death drag his own fighters.

3. Ships. You don't have the direct-fire *punch* to cripple anyone at range 8 in one volley. You can easily do it in two turns however.

4. Any kind of Andromedan, due to the leak rules.

In general, if you arm disruptors at all, try and fire at least three of them by impulse #25, in order to have them recycle by impulse #1. (And you were wondering where Klingons got their aggressive reputation...)

Try to concentrate your fire. A competent opponent will attempt to spread your damage over several shields. With your turn mode, this is rather hard for him to do.

With the flexible arming and firing of disruptors, firing a disruptor and missing is a lot less painful than doing so with a photon or hellbore. Remember this — it's better to shoot it and miss than to discharge it into space.

KLINGON SCATTER-PACK USAGE

There are two schools of thought about the use of the Klingon scatter-pack.

One is to pop it out early in the turn and re-cycle the shuttle as Hemenway described in his *Victory at Origins* article (CL#9). With careful timing, you can regenerate your drone stack twice over eight impulses, as your opponent chooses between shooting you and shooting your drones. (Try to keep your control channels full when trying this.) This does limit you when trying for high speed runs, if you're dead-set on recycling the shuttle.

The other use of the scatter-pack is to keep it in the bay until your opponent has fired his alpha strike at you and after you've launched two drones at him that he's shot down. If you have guts to sit at range 4 from a Fed and smile at overloaded photons, this is a very satisfying tactic.

In all cases, try and launch a full spread of drones and a suicide shuttle at the poor schlub, and maybe even a fake scatter-pack at him before you pop the real one on him. Use expendable seeking weapons as a screen for the scatter-pack.

DOGFIGHT DRONES IN THE ADD RACK

If it's a choice between taking a drone hit or losing your ADD rack on the DAC, lose the drone rack. The ADD is a significantly more flexible system.

1. ADDs can help you kill a suicide shuttle that's coming at you, or that WW the sneaky Rom was hiding behind, or do that final point of damage you need to cripple that Stinger-2.
2. If you have a dogfight drone, you can ruin the nasty surprise scatter-pack the Kzinti was laying for you...or another Klingon, for that matter.

PHASER CAPACITORS

One hidden advantage of the Klingon TC is its very large phaser capacitor, which is able to store 10 points of power. This enables you to treat your rear phaser-2s as phaser-3s, with "free" reloads for a turn.

The sheer *number* of phasers the Klingon TC has highlights another hidden Klingon advantage: *durability*. It is an incredibly frustrating process to Mizia a Klingon. The extra phasers make for some wonderful "armor." And, as over half of those phasers are of the cheap-to-repair variety, the armor tends to regenerate.

TRANSPORTERS

One very unpleasant trick that Klingons have been known to use to great effect is to beam five Marine squads in for hit-and-run raids on a point of battery power. This can come as a *rude* shock to someone who thought the turn was in all effects over.

Guard your UIM module. Always. After that, guard one of your drone racks and at least one of your tractor beams

When fighting the Kzinti, do a hit-and-run raid on his scanner track. Knocking out his solitary "0" can render his phaser-3s useless due to the induced range shift.

SURVIVING ON A CLOSED MAP

Speed is life. Given a choice between spending two points to hold or arm a pair of WWs and two more hexes of movement (and a generally better chance of avoiding seeking weapons), I'll take the movement. As for maneuver, I will nearly always try to break to my *far* corner of the map after salvoing some disruptors at my opponent's primary shield (shield #1 for most of the traditional opponents). Breaking for the *far* corner gives you room to evade and run and time to turn around and fight.

Some typical speed plots:

Speed 15 from impulse #1 to impulse #15, speed 21 to the end of the turn. Total of 19 points of power. Also, speed 21 to impulse #17 and speed 15 for the rest of the turn. Also total 19.

Speed 21 from impulse #1-#17, speed 15 from impulse #18-#25, and speed 28 from impulse #26 to the end of the turn. Total of 22 points spent on movement. This is wonderful for drawing plasma torpedoes across the board and gives you a wonderful block of maneuver in the center of the turn.

If you can succeed in this for two turns, you can aggravate any plasma user in the Galaxy.

Finally, never weasel if you can possibly avoid it. Weaseling only asks to be tractoried and fed plasmas through an aft shield.

COMBAT REPAIRS

One of the other hidden advantages of the Klingon TC (and the Kzinti) is the repair rules. Getting a destroyed photon or hellbore back into the fight is a losing proposition. And for plasmas, TRs, or PPDs, it's even worse.

A disruptor can be repaired to a range-10 model in one turn, can be armed immediately, and can be fired *immediately*. Once again, this can come as a *rude* surprise to someone. The same also applies to the phaser-2s and phaser-3s. (Repairing two phaser-3s can protect your good phasers for the rest of the fight.)

The same also applies to drone racks if you have a reload drone or two available to put in them.

PRACTICING TIMING

A very good way to practice timing on a new tactic is to describe the tactic to someone else and then counter what he makes of it. Usually, this means you will be able to customize or improve it. As an added benefit, your erstwhile opponent, having tried the tactic, and in all probability, lost to it, will be more inclined to dismiss it when it's pulled against him again.

AGAINST THE HYDRANS

Rule #1: The fighters must die. No ifs, ands, or buts. The fighters *MUST* die, or *YOU* will die. The Hydran was the single most popular non-plasma ship at the tournaments I've run, and in every single case, the Hydran who lost his fighters died. Horribly.

Killing fighters is easy. Three standard disruptors can cripple one at range 11-15, before he can respond with anything. Fire a fourth disruptor, or a phaser, to give yourself better odds.

At range 8, waste a phaser-1 and an overloaded disruptor at each fighter. You will *STILL* out-phaser the Hydran ship.

At range 5, two phaser-1s will kill a Stinger-2. (This is useful to know when you're driving a Federation cruiser, which can't afford to waste his firepower.)

Looked at closely, the Hydran ship has got the same phaser armament as the Kzinti, the equivalent of four phaser-1s and eight phaser-3 shots. It has even *worse* firing arcs than the Kzinti. The fusion beams aren't much to worry about outside of range 2, and anyone who lets a Hydran get to range 2 deserves what he gets. The hellbores are the only weapon he's got that can reach out and touch you. And they're *HUNGRY* weapons to feed. They also spend half of their damage sandpapering your shields. Use your batteries to specifically reinforce a shield as it gets hit, and try and get hit on a reinforced shield. Having hellbore damage divided over four shields will leave you with standard Klingon shielding, and a truly terrified methane breather.

KLINGON AGAINST THE GORN

The Gorn is the worst of the plasma ships and worthy of some discussion. Beating a Gorn on a closed map takes some work. The first thing you need to know is *WHERE* you are going. The second thing you need to know is where you want scaly to think you're going. This is where that 21-15-28 split comes from.

Ideally, you want the Gorn to be moving down the grain of the map towards you. (At speed 21, do a "cross the T" path, turning 60° left, and side-slip towards the Gorn.) You want to fire your disruptors at a range of about 12-15, just before they go out of arc. (This is assuming that the Gorn is floating around speed 24, a typical battle speed.)

Most Gorns, jealous of their turn mode and having to act to cut you off, will waddle to their right to follow you.

Timed right, you should be hitting range 8 at about the time your turn mode is satisfied at speed 15, with your FX and one wing phaser *JUST* in arc. Fire them and turn 60° away so that you're now pointed *AWAY* from the Gorn, moving speed 15, and looking *very* worried. Launch a drone or two at him as he closes the range to soak up his phasers. He'll be at range 5 and have you centerlined if things go well. At this point, he'll probably launch a flurry of plasma torpedoes at you. *Don't panic*. Remember that in about two impulses, one of which you move on, you have seven uninterrupted hexes of movement and a better turn mode. Turn away, but sideslip towards the hex row he's on. Fire whatever phasers will bear into his #1 shield. It's always good to hurt that shield, and the phasers will recycle by the first of the next turn when you want to fire at the plasma torps. Always leave a few points in the torpedo, and keep track of which torpedo came from which launcher. Take the weakened torpedo on your #3 and #5 shields so that you will know if it is real or not. Doing this two turns in a row will leave you with a Gorn who is usually shy one plasma-F, one PPT, and one or both S-torps. Also, you'll know which launcher has the real one. *However*, he will have reloaded them in two turns, so make the most of the window.

An added refinement to this tactic is to launch your SP at the Gorn, going speed 0, set to release at a range of nine hexes, and lead the Gorn towards it as you run from his plasma. Launch your suicide shuttle in this role as well; it gives him more targets to waste phasers at. (Launch the shuttles early in the turn.)

Finally, when faced with any plasmas owned by the plasma races, shoot at the F-torps. You *KNOW* they're real.

The shields to take the plasma on are #5, #3, and #1. These are your three "expendable" shields. The Gorn, on the other hand, needs to protect his #1 shield. Without it, he can't fire both S-torps without risking internal damage. Two turns of dancing will usually punch through his #1. And any plasmas he may have armed won't be enough to seriously hurt you on a fresh shield.

The key is to remember that if it's only one plasma, and it's on a fresh shield, eat it and dish out your damage for about two more turns. With the Klingon turn mode, you always have an opportunity to present a fresh shield to a plasma.

REPLY BY MICHAEL GASTRIGHT: I enjoyed your writing on how to defeat a Gorn. You have fought and won using this theory before? All in all, it sounds like a good plan of attack.

If I may, I would like to spend a few moments picking at it in order to ensure I understand fully (and to allow you to expound on some of the more subtle points).

Let me start by pointing out the obvious. The weak link appears to be the key to success. That link is in making the Gorn launch the "flurry" of torps just before your speed change. It will be difficult to arrange the timing exactly as you have put it, hopefully not too difficult. So, now for the questioning...

Exactly how difficult is it to arrange the ship positions? Such timing would appear to take a fair bit of extra concentration for the first couple of tries. What would you say your success rate of managing this timing is, and do you think the "flurry" might be

launched at longer ranges?

Since we are discussing *tournament* tactics, it would be assumed that you do not know your opponent personally. If your opponent did know you (and, therefore, knew this tactic), what would be his best chances of defeating it?

Do you consider the option of firing a full volley of bolts and phasers at range 5 something that would give the Gorn an advantage at this range? What reasons would he not have for choosing this route (especially if he had encountered this tactic before).

REPLY BY KEN BURNSIDE: If my opponent knows me and holds his torps, I arrange another pass across the *length* of the map, cutting diagonally to a far corner and pumping another salvo of disruptors into his #1 shield. The main difficulty I have with the Gorn holding his torps is that I am usually worrying too much about the maneuvers to give me enough power to arm all disruptors and phasers.

The speed change is only one of *many* that you can use. You can extend the speed 15 segment of it for a longer time, or use a continual acceleration.

I prepare a list of about 14 mid-turn speed plots for the Klingon TC, ranging in power costs from 12 to about 23 to 25. Everyone should do that. Once again, *KNOW YOUR SHIP*.

I no longer use the unload two drones from the SP tactic. All of my opponents have learned to use their labs. The last time I got it to work was by upgrading two of the type-Is to speed 32 to make it seem likelier that they were type-IVs.

In general, it's better to have an opponent fire his phasers at you rather than at your drones or your SP. As mentioned earlier, one way to keep your SP intact is to launch at a *VERY* long range, wait for the drones to cycle, and then follow them in. The more traditional way is to suck up an opponent's phaser fire with two drones from your rack, a suicide shuttle, and your ship, then pop out the scatter-pack while tractoring your opponent. Your ship will *NOT* be pretty after doing this. Your opponent, however, will look much worse.

If the Gorn bolts the plasmas, *smile*. The odds are that one will miss. Rational playing says that he's just blown his wad for two turns if he fired enough to get internals on you. That's when you HET and show him what four overloaded disruptors do at range 3, followed by *lots* of phasers.

REPLY BY FLEET CAPTAIN TOM CARROLL: About your tactics versus the Gorn which brought about the mention of plasma bolts. A Gorn won't fall for this trick. He'll try to get as close to you as possible and try to anchor. If you announce a speed change to 28 and are pointed directly away, and he has you centerlined, he will more than likely bolt. He isn't going to get any closer, and any launched plasma will be wasted. At that range (5), six phaser-1s will do 21 points (average) of damage, and two or three plasma bolts should hit for another 33 (average) points. That's 54 points to a rear shield. He will then HET and run away, possibly firing the two RA phaser-1s through the down shield if still facing him. The reason he does this? Because you can't HET going speed 28 and therefore can't give immediate chase. Also, the 30 or so internals is rather inviting.

If you want to beat a Gorn, meet him at range 4 with four overloaded disruptors and then run at a speed 26. If he's trying to anchor you, then you more than likely pumped your alpha strike of 43-51 points down his #1 shield. Now he'll have fun chasing you without his main front shield. You do have to be careful going to range 4 because, if he can close to range 3, he can tractor you on that turn or the next with a lot of power. So try to make your pass in the final few impulses, and keep the range at 4 or greater. If you can't get to range 4 safely, range 5 isn't bad.

Another part of my tactics versus the Gorn is to have four fast and two slow drones in my scatter-pack and get it launched and broken by Impulse #16. If the Gorn is closing, he'll have to

deal with the fast drones before reaching range 5. Once he does, you can launch more drones from your racks, effectively having eight drones on the board during one turn.

FIVE WAYS TO DIE IN A KLINGON D7T

1. Close to range 2 and swap alpha strikes.
2. Plot a speed of less than 10.
3. Weasel.
4. Get pinned to a wall by a higher "crunch power" race.
5. Leave your scatter-pack in the shuttle bay.

RATED ACE JOHN HAMMER, HYDRAN DEPUTY CMDR

When playing a Klingon, I remember two key ideas:

If I am going to fire a disruptor at range 3-8, I fire an overload. The UIM makes a single overloaded disruptor a better shot than two standard loads.

I don't arm the disruptors unless I am going to get something useful out of them. They can't be held, and the power saved goes for speed and arming phasers. A very good way to begin a game against an opponent who wants to close with you (Feds, Roms, Gorns, Hydrans) is to arm four overloads and try to end the turn at range 8 with the opponent in your FA arc. Fire the disruptors and phaser-1s (and maybe phaser-2s) near the end of the turn, preferably on his #1 shield. Then stay at range 8 or thereabouts for a few turns, using the power saved by not arming the disruptors to keep away and to continually maneuver onto the down or weak shield for a phaser attack. When this has done enough internal damage, or you can no longer stay away, stall until the beginning of a new turn. Then turn, TAC, or HET toward your enemy and blast him with overloads for the *coup de grace*.

FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

The Klingon tournament ship needs to do significant damage quickly. Turn 1 is a critical turn. A procedure I have found useful is to arm two standard disruptors and two overloads. This leaves 23 points for movement, etc. A speed of 15 for half of the turn and 30 for the rest (or 17/28) uses 22 points; the remaining point could arm a suicide shuttle or WW. I then attempt to reach range 8 and unload the phaser-1s and four overloads (using batteries). This generally wrecks a shield (hopefully his #1, which I may have been able to attack through superior maneuvering). On turn 2 I can run (not arming disruptors; they're the only torpedo [besides fusions] that you can fire one turn without having armed them previously). If my opponent used high first turn speed and has pinned me, I can overload, recharge phasers, flip around, and dump on the wrecked shield (which hopefully I have stayed on). The scatter-pack can be useful if you know your opponent wants to run you over. Launching it initially at long range, I can run back through my own drone cloud on turn 2, forcing my opponent to burn phasers or use tractors. Against plasma opponents, I may unload the scatter-pack for use as reloads and an extra WW.

TONY ZBARASCHUK, KZINTI COMMANDER

One note about the multiple-speed-change tactic: By doing this, you effectively give up the opportunity to make unplotted speed changes. This may not matter (especially during the first turn), but unplotted speed changes have saved my ship more than once. If you must change speed, do so early or mid-turn so that you can make late-turn unplotted changes.

Note: It may be possible to do an unplotted change to the speed you would be moving after your next plotted speed change. This helps somewhat, but not always. If, for instance, your last speed change was six impulses ago, you cannot

change speed for the next two impulses no matter what.

The ADD can REALLY save your life, especially when flying against a Kzinti, a WYN, or another Klingon. The ADD is also good for Hydran fighters.

Against an Andromedan, do not launch the SP immediately. He will simply T-bomb your drones out of existence. Start unloading its drones on turn 1 and launch it on turn 2, with four drones. Make him wonder if using the T-bomb would be worth it. Generally, though, your drones will serve to absorb his phasers, reducing it to a duel of TRs vs. disruptors AND phasers.

REPLY BY MICHAEL GASTRIGHT: As an Andromedan player, your drone tactics are not going to be sufficient to achieve quite the effectiveness you hope for (or, at least, not in my experience). The Andro should maintain a speed of at least 24 most of the time, and usually higher when attack runs are to be made. He should not have too much trouble avoiding the speed-20 drones without using phasers or his T-bomb. They will be a severe nuisance until properly disposed of, but only a nuisance.

The idea of unloading two drones seems like a good one to consider. It does leave the threat of heavies in the batch while still leaving your racks able to fire some drones from a different angle (which could force a T-bomb or some phaser fire). Nothing could be worse than having six speed-20 drones milling about the board with an Andro preparing to do an attack run (leaving the drones harmlessly behind). It would seem a waste to have to drop tracking for two drones from your racks. Also, having two drones for your racks after he expects they are empty could be a nasty surprise. Of course, the Klingon may not live long enough to use the two reloads!

JOHN BERG, KLINGON DEPUTY COMMANDER

The Klingon TC is probably one of the most recognized ships in the game. Many beginners and less experienced players choose this ship in a tournament out of familiarity with the Star Trek genre. They almost always lose, as does anyone who picks a ship without having trained to use it.

The Klingon TC is a good ship, but probably one of the most difficult to win with. It takes a supreme amount of finesse and skill to be successful with it. It is like taking a .22 rifle into a duel when most of your opponents have shotguns. You can be victorious, but *not* by standing head-to-head with your opponent. (He will blow you away.) Instead, just as the .22 rifleman must jockey for position and cover, so should the Klingon.

Klingon advantages are maneuverability, rapid and accurate fire, and a multitude of phasers. Speed is life for the Klingon. You should always try to go faster than your opponent, but still try to keep a turn mode advantage. With skill and good navigation, you can "sabre dance" your opponent into submission, then close in for the kill. There are two prime ranges for a Klingon: 9-15 for softening the enemy up and 5-8 for the kill. At 9-15 in an oblique attack, you will average eight damage points for your disruptors and about five for your four phaser-1s and two phaser-2s. That's 13 points of annoying damage *every* turn. A good D7 captain uses his maneuverability to hit the same shield every turn. At the 5-8 range, the Klingon is supreme; 20 for disruptors and 11 for phasers = 31 *per turn!* The real help here is of course the UIM and its 83% chance to hit at range 5-8. Use the Klingon's superior maneuverability and continuing accurate fire to wear your opponent down or to force him to make a mistake.

Where does a Klingon find cover? Drones! It's all you have to protect yourself from the shotgun blasts coming your way. Your scatter-pack is your best protection; use it only as a shield to hide behind as you close or as a deterrent as you run from the "shotgunners."

The Klingon TC suffers from fragility, lack of sustainability, and no offensive crunch effect. The D7CT has the unfortunate problem of having little "padding" or nonessential systems for

protection against internals. The Klingon is usually not very happy after taking an alpha strike. And to make it worse, he generally cannot (in one turn) give the equal to what he just received. Avoid getting trapped in corners; it may be necessary to forget charging disruptors to pull a high speed maneuver in order to gain position. Finally, realize that most "shotgunners" will not fear an alpha strike exchange with you because of the above mentioned disadvantages.

As a last word, you have some "tricks" that will confound opponents: revised firing arcs, all phasers can fire to the rear, ADDs can kill fighters and shuttles, your UIM won't burn out.

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

The Klingon ship is one of the most average tournament ships. Not only do its weapons do only average damage, but also there are only an average number of them, seemingly not enough to be fully effective. The Klingon is very difficult to excel with, which might explain its rather poor tournament record of late.

The disruptors of the Klingon ship are the only exceptional thing about it, and this is because of the burnout-proof UIM. This means that, statistically, you can expect to hit with at least three disruptors in any volley of overloads or at least eighteen points of damage each time you reach range 8. Combined with your five phaser-1s, this is almost, but not quite, enough to penetrate a shield from that distance. And it's not quite enough to deter your enemy from overrunning you, assuming he wants to do so.

The other advantage you have, along with any other disruptor ship, is that from range 9-15 your saber dance can be very effective. You can do eight points of damage (on the average) from that range every turn with disruptors alone, presuming your opponent refuses (or is unable) to close range with you. Over a significant period of time, you can easily whittle away his shields from this distance.

You also have drones, two B-racks, and an ADD with a couple of type-VIs in it. These are useful only to draw enemy phaser fire as two drones a turn are not nearly enough to draw a weasel or force a maneuver.

Only the scatter-pack can do that, but you don't have enough drone points to make it much of a threat. The scatter-pack can turn aside an overrun from all but the most heavily phasered ships, but you can only do it once. Make it count! First, decide on a plan of attack in advance. The scatter-pack is the only way you are going to set up a really significant drone wave, so time its launch and subsequent release well. Your enemy will be watching you and may try a long-range shot at the scatter-pack, so launch a decoy or two, and plan a mid-turn acceleration to coincide with the actual scatter-pack burst.

Next, make sure that your ship is ready to launch drones as soon as the enemy starts shooting the ones from the scatter-pack. This is where you should use your fast drones as your enemy will already be low on phasers. Try to get the scatter-pack drones to reach him early in the turn to draw his phasers, leaving him open for your overrun. Yes, the Klingon can overrun, provided it is well planned!

Finally, the alternate use for the SP is as a follow-up strike. After your enemy has emptied his weapons (e.g., the Fed's photons or the Gorn's plasmas) would be an optimal time for the SP. You know he will be moving slowly and will be vulnerable to your speed-20 drones. The Gorn or Rom is a particularly good target during that final turn of rearming, presuming he was foolish enough to try reloading all his torpedoes in a single turn.

And one last note. The Klingon ship has only four forward hull hits to cover the batteries, and once the five batteries are gone, it will start taking shuttle hits on the 7-track of the DAC. Do not hold your SP too long, or it will be destroyed in the bay.

Klingon D7CT Advantages: The scatter-pack, cross-deck phaser arcs (keep a copy of these handy, but where your opponent can't see them), dogfight drones make a nice surprise,

ADDs make fighting the Kzinti and WYN easier (and provide a surprise against shuttles), plenty of transporters for hit-and-run raids, excellent turn mode.

Disadvantages: Not enough punch to hurt someone while within their effective range, not enough drones to get up more than one good wave per scenario, very little hull to protect key systems (especially batteries; go ahead and burn them for reinforcement if you're going to take more than 10 internals in a single volley).

The D7CT is a challenging ship to fly, but handled properly, it can be a winner.

RAY OLESEN, FEDERATION COMMANDER

One comment mentioned launching a scatter-pack combined with suicide shuttles. Do not forget the Klingon doesn't have double drone control; you can't control six drones and the suicide shuttles at the same time. The four-drone scatter-pack may be one of the best options when fighting Andros. You only use four control channels, so you can launch drones from your ship. If two of the drones on the scatter-pack are speed 32, you can separate them enough where one T-bomb cannot get more than two of them, and if drones are launched from the ship, the Andro will have to ID them to know which (if any) are type-IVs since any drone on the map could be either a -I or a -IV. While someone else pointed out the use of a four-drone SP, these points were not made, thus I wanted bring these out.

SCOTT MERCER, STAR FLEET STAFF

This ship has the distinction of having mediocre direct-fire capability AND mediocre seeking-weapon capability. This gives it flexibility, but at the expense of quick kills. You HAVE to work at it to win with the Klingon TC. You can't slug it out with most races in a knife-fight (due to lack of penetrating internals and crunch power) and can't compete in the seeking weapon department with plasma boys or the Kzinti. A commander must find every way to occupy his opponent's time in order to let the disruptors plink at his enemy. He has to use his turn mode to set up optimal firing positions for him, but not his enemy. He has to use his drones to occupy phasers. Shuttles can be used as suicide platforms, or even just as phaser-3s. Throw the kitchen sink at him.

The scatter-pack is the Klingon's only way to really intimidate an opponent from closing, and he only has one. Leaving it on the ship while engaging the enemy means you didn't delay your opponent's rush long enough and will have to engage before you wanted to. Timing is truly everything with this ship. Being able to make a snap judgment during the turn and say, "Now is the time to close," is really the crucial ability. To do this, the Klingon is blessed with an excellent power curve and a nice turn mode. But it means that speed is necessary. You have to be in control of the range and facings of your ship to his.

While you don't have many internals, and your ability to stop penetrating hits is pretty bad (mainly due to the lack of F Hull), you *do* have 18 weapon boxes on your ship, which is more than the ships with crunch power (plasma, Fed, Hydran, Orion). You can take a few weapon hits and not lose a significant amount of damage potential. (Compare this to the Hydran, who only has six phasers and two very important drone hits.) Combine this with the excellent turn mode and you have a ship really hard to significantly Mizia.

How can you not love the firing arcs on the phasers?

Don't forget about your SEVEN transporters. It can be really annoying to your opponent to have seven hit-and-run raids done to his ship. Five is almost as good, and requires an even 1.0 points of power and lets you guard the tractors, nose phasers, and both warp engines. Which you should.

ROMULAN TACTICS

1. Against the Klingon – Don't Cloak!
2. Against the Kzinti – Don't Cloak!
3. Against the Tholian – *Don't Cloak!*
4. Against the Lyran – Cloak and *Die!*—*John Hammer*

The Romulan TC won the SFB National Championship in 1983, 1986, 1989, and 1991, the only ship to win four times, and the only ship to win more than once.—*Official records*

FLEET CAPTAIN PAELLA

Fleet Captain Paella was the 1991 National Champion, flying the Romulan TC.

1. Always keep one of the S-torps on rolling delay. This will allow you to use it as an EPT (or shotgun; though not likely, or recommended). If needed, you can always put two points of reserve power into the rolling-S and launch it normally if you like.

2. If you are unsure whether you'll need to cloak on the upcoming turn or not, and you're going to put the power into cloak just in case you do cloak, only allocate 13 points into the cloak and recharge your batteries up to five (if necessary). This will save you five points of power if you don't cloak on the next turn, due to the circumstances. If you do actually need to cloak, use your five batteries to fulfil the cost. If you think you'll need a battery, allocate 14 or 15 points.

3. When fighting either the Klingon or the Kzinti, this tactic has worked very well for me. On the first turn for either of these ships, they can only have ONE wild weasel ready at WS-III. This is due to the restriction of being able to have a maximum of two special shuttles ready at WS-III (a WW and their scatter-pack). On the first turn of the tourney, you should plot a speed of 29 for the whole turn and hold one WW and both S-torps. Simply charge the Kzinti or Klingon, and try to get to range 3 or less. They really have only a few options when a Romulan does this:

- 3A. Launch their scatter-pack in hope that it will detour you. Since the Kzinti can have a max of eight fast drones, and the Klingon can only have four, this really isn't much of a problem to deal with. Fly around the medium-speed drones, and use your phasers and ONE tractor to take care of the fast drones. NOTICE: Use only one tractor on drones; the other will be needed to anchor their ship.
- 3B. They can fire at you at ranges of 5-8, scoring only shield damage (unless they roll all "1"s with their phaser-1s), and then try to run away. This leaves the Rom with a very opportune time to bolt his loads on weaker shields.
- 3C. They can wait until you get very close and exchange alpha strikes with you. What usually happens in this situation is the Klingon or Kzinti announces emer decel when the Romulan is about four or five hexes away, so they can fire their alpha strike and be capable of launching a WW when the Romulan launches his torps. Since the Klingon and Kzinti can only have one WW ready for turn 1, any competent plasma user should be able to lure out and kill their only WW without expending more than 30% of his plasma power (by using combinations of pseudoes and F-torps.) There is one major thing the Romulan must watch out for in this situation. Make sure the Kzinti or Klingon doesn't launch (or you don't kill) their WW on impulse #28 or latter. If this happens, they will be protected from your torps AND your tractors until the beginning of the next turn, when they will probably have at least one more WW ready.

4. I've found the following boarding party guard placement to work the best for the Rom TC:

- ALL plasma launchers (for obvious reasons)
- The cloaking device (for obvious reasons)
- Shuttle bay (very important: WW, SS, PH-3 platforms, etc.)
- Both tractor beams (for anchoring, drone + ftr protection)
- The five impulse engines (one guard is needed). Impulse power can be critical when two ships are damaged and very close to one another (a situation that most tournament games come down to). Warp TACs followed by an impulse TAC, on the very next impulse, have saved me a number of times; not to mention it helps avoid Mizia damage. Also, when most people conduct hit-and-run raids, they try to target boxes that they believe to be unguarded.

NOTICE: I've only used 9 of my 12 boarding parties because the Rom TC has exactly three transporters (in the event I need to attempt hit-and-run raids). Since there is no ship capturing in tournaments, there is no need for unused BPs.

5. Here are some quick tips for the various opponents:

- FED: Use EPTs, and cloak, wisely.
- KLINGON: Run him over.
- ANOTHER ROM: Bring out your bag of tricks for this one.
- KZINTI: Run over him.
- GORN: Be prepared to bolt or (if he's out of torps) CHARGE!!!
- THOLIAN: Never slow down, avoid cloaking, and be ready to bolt your plasmas.
- ORION: Your tactics depend on his option mounts.
- HYDRAN: If his fighters are not destroyed, NEVER cloak; Use EPTs to minimize his ability to slice and dice your torps with his phaser-Gs.
- ANDROMEDAN: Go speed 26 (or whatever safe speed your ship can go and still HET), and take what piddly damage he does to you, and then show him what a *Honndret Pointz of Plazzmaa* can do!
- LYRAN: Avoid cloaking at all costs. Follow your EPTs into close combat. The EPTs will commit him into using his phaser-1s defensively.
- WYN: Depends on option mounts. If you can slow this pig down (speed 10 or less) you shouldn't have any problems with him. Also, keep in mind this thing doesn't like to do HETs.
- ISC: Keep your speed up, and try to get behind him. This opponent takes a great deal of finesse to contend with.

6. When fighting another plasma ship: If and when your opponent launches plasmas at you, don't run away from them unless he launches more than 60-70 points of plasma. Stay on your intended and original course. Making sure the torpedoes are on a side shield when they are one hex away, fire all bearing phasers at them (but make sure they both hit to find out if they're real or not). Let us assume that both ARE real. Most TCs can do about 48 points of phaser damage at range-1. This would reduce two full strength S-torps down to a total of 36 points of plasma. Bumping these on a slightly reinforced shield would yield no internals, a down side shield, and an opponent with very little firepower for at LEAST three turns. Weigh your options before running away from plasma torps. If a plasma ship launches his entire load at you, then YES, run for the hills or consider weaseling. Be happy when your plasma opponent launches EPTs at you early in the game when you are undamaged. You might not even need to fire your phasers at them to avoid internals, then you can chase him into a corner and slay him.

7. Hunting cloaked ships: Stay close, fire phasers, keep tractors warm, prepare to weasel, and be ready to fire one impulse before he fully uncloaks.

SCOTT MERCER, STAR FLEET STAFF

Strengths: (1) the cloak (2) FP plasma arcs.

Weaknesses: (1) the cloak, (2) lack of labs, (3) few overall internals, (4) lack of phaser-1s.

The cloak can either be a big help or a real liability, depending entirely on how well you use it. Without digression into a big discussion on the cloak, just remember a few things. Don't try to cloak too close to the enemy or when going too fast as this gives him die rolls to retain lock-on. Plot a speed of 4 or less when cloaking so that you can use a WW to help with breaking a lock. Don't forget to plan for a speed yoyo (just in case). When uncloaking, don't be predictable. Don't try coming out when your opponent is right on top of you (a HET can be handy for this, but is not a really good solution), and don't think you're completely invulnerable under cloak and let people get a phaser shot on a down shield.

The Rom TC with its two labs has serious problems vs. the Kzinti or Klingon as it is hard to gain definite IDs on swarms to figure out which are the type-IVs.

Your seven-point phaser capacitor is very small. You can fire five phaser-1s down the oblique hex rows, but that's as good as it gets. You can also fire four anywhere in the FX arc. This seems decent, except those are all you have. The four phaser-3s help protect the phaser-1s and are handy against drones since all four can fire to the rear centerline.

Also, don't expect to come out of a close range volley unscathed. You don't have a huge number of internals.

But you do have a few things that are nice. Your FP S-torps allow you to bolt two S-torps and an F-torp at a target in the FA, compared to the Gorn, who has to centerline somebody. It is also a lot easier to fire your S-torps together at somebody, and you don't have to face towards your target. This means that you can fire 80 points of plasma and be in a position to either turn away OR towards your target immediately.

And always remember, never cloak because you can. Cloak because you HAVE to.

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

The Romulan is believed by some to be the best tournament ship. Fighting against it can be a long, boring affair as the ship lobs plasmas at you and retreats into cloak anytime you move in its general direction. This can be quite frustrating to any but another plasma ballet fan, and the Romulan should use this to his (or her) advantage. You need patience for this sort of tactic. Be wary, though, of time limits. If a time limit is being enforced at your tournament, the ballet will not be decisive enough to ensure victory, and the judge will probably rule against you.

Discounting the cloak for a moment, the real advantage of the Romulan (over the other plasma ships) is that all its torpedoes can bear in the 30° arc directly ahead of the ship. The fact that both S-torps also face in the FP arc is probably its greatest asset, and it makes the oblique approach both possible and desirable. Consider also that all five phaser-1s can fire directly down the forward port and starboard hex spines (the row of hexes extending outward off your #2 and #6 shields), and the manner of approach towards your target becomes quite obvious.

There seem to be two schools of thought over using the heavy plasma torpedoes on the Romulan ship. One of these is to fire them normally and close behind them, forcing your enemy to guess at whether they are real or not. The other choice is to envelop them, firing one near the end of the first turn and the other sometime during the second. In either case you can go into cloak if anything goes wrong, unlike the other plasma races.

The normal S-torpedo tactic is useful against certain opponents, especially those who must come close to do damage or who must move slowly to charge their weapons. For example, if

you are fighting the Hydran, tossing a couple of S-torps his way and charging him will really make him stop and wonder. If he guesses right and phasers down your real plasmas, you'll have to run away, but if he guesses wrong, you win the scenario.

The enveloping tactic is good when you want to keep your opponent at a distance, as in the case of the Fed or another plasma ship. No matter what he might think, he can't afford to eat an enveloping torpedo because you can just cloak and rearm, starting the process over but with his shields reduced by over 33%. And launching an enveloper just as you start to fade into cloak will keep him far, far away while you retreat and reload your plasmas.

The cloak should be used with care; it is not a panacea. Use it when you need to, but not before. Remember that your opponent knows it costs you a lot of power, and if he's close by, he might try tractoring you before you fade out. Don't let this happen, or you will be SORRY!

The ideal times to cloak are: (1) when you are out of plasmas, (2) when your opponent is just outside overload range (especially the Fed) and is closing rapidly, and (3) just after launching plasmas, such as in the enveloper mentioned above. Do NOT cloak just because you have it on your ship and feel like you need to use it or you aren't a "true" Romulan. (There are no "true" Romulans left. They have all been executed by the Praetor for being too aggressive and power-hungry!)

A few quick cloak tactics. First, consider launching a weasel as you are fading out (which will virtually guarantee his losing lock-on to you) or as you are fading in (ensuring that you will, at the very least, get your plasmas away before he fires on you, unless he wants to deal with the 2-shift). This trick will also keep him from tractoring you.

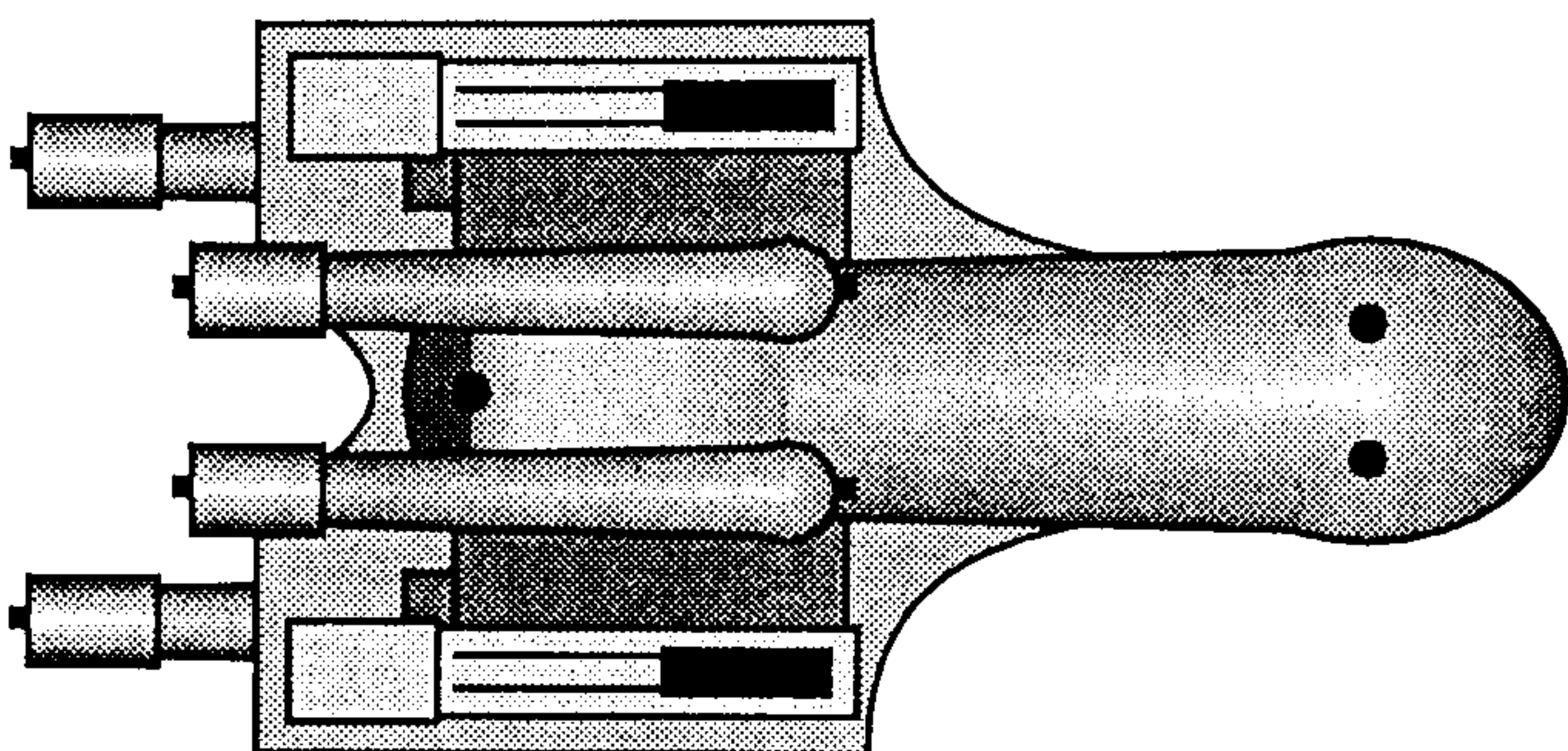
Second, don't forget that you can fade right back in if your enemy chooses to let loose on you as you start fading out. You can also, if you start the turn cloaked, fade in, fire, and fade back out again. Beware, though, you will be going slow, and your opponent knows you won't have power for shields or tractors.

Finally, if you are concerned about your enemy keeping lock-on to you as you fade out, be sure you aren't moving at all. He will lose lock-on unless he is at range 0 (not bloody likely) AND rolls a 1! This is a great tactic to use against the Kzinti or another plasma ship as it takes away his seeking weapons without (necessarily) using up a weasel. However, it leaves you going slow and vulnerable to MORE seeking weapons. Accelerate to speed 10 as soon as possible; you can then go 20 on the following turn when you uncloak.

One final thing that should be noted about the Romulan, and any of the plasma ships, is that it can move very quickly when it wants to. At the beginning of the game, you can move speed 24, envelop a plasma, and power just about everything else.

Advantages: The cloaking device (be sure to guard it), very aggressive plasma arcs, four phaser-3s to absorb phaser internals, can move very quickly when it wants to.

Disadvantages: Few control spaces (guard them), difficult to get all phasers in arc, only two labs, fewer internal boxes than the other plasma ships, virtually NO firepower directly aft.



FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

One thing I haven't seen so far is WHERE to cloak. People have talked about when, and when not to, but not about where on the map is best to cloak. It is of utmost importance to cloak right next to a board edge. The corners themselves can be even better. This will allow you to "bury" shields which may have been previously damaged, but more importantly, your opponent won't be able to get behind you. Also, if your opponent has decided to sit and watch you, you can jack the speed up and underrun him. You should try to get him to waste his HET if possible. You can combine some forward movement, zero speed with TACs, and some backward movement to achieve a positional advantage.

Generally, you don't want to uncloak near someone (unless they've just expended their alpha strike), so maneuver while cloaked is doubly important. You really can't cloak if the Hydran's fighters are still alive. They will easily maintain range 0 on you, and when you uncloak, you die. When fighting the disruptor races, remember that the disruptor is probably the best anti-cloak weapon (it hits really well, especially the Klingon UIM). Cloaking to kill a drone wave might look attractive, but evaluate all your options first. Also, don't forget that a WEB exposes a cloaked ship. This gives the Tholian plenty of opportunities to lock on and TRACTOR you (possibly sending suicide shuttles in).

KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

ANTI-CLOAK TACTICS

If you're a Lyran, smile. Pump up the ESGs to max strength and run him over.

If you're a Tholian, snicker. Lay web around him, expose him, and feed him all sorts of unpleasantness.

If you're a Klingon, remember that your UIM requires a lock-on to function. And get behind him.

If you're a Kzinti, and 10 drones said goodbye without a forwarding address, worry.

HIDDEN STRENGTHS

The balanced hull layout increases durability. A Romulan can take photons on a front shield and still come in to fight.

The excellent turn mode. Note that at very high speeds, a Romulan is as maneuverable as a Klingon or Tholian. (For that matter, so are the Kzinti and Hydran.) This, combined with the wonderful firing arcs, makes for a graceful Plasma Ballerina.

Don't forget the old tried and true tactic, the Romulan Anchor. (Ask any Fed about who invented it first...)

As a class, the plasma ships have some of the best power curves in the TC set. Which is *really* annoying at times.

When starting out, have an suicide armed. Think of it as your "fifth plasma." Especially when you anchor someone.

PLASMA ARMING

One rather unorthodox arming procedure I've seen used by our local Romulan Tribune is to arm one of the S-torps as a G and pay the reduced holding cost. If you plan on sitting on your torps and chasing your opponent into a corner, this pays off in the extra point of power. It also costs you less than the normal cost for reserve arming an S from rolling delay. (Reserve loading a delayed S takes two batteries. Reserve upgrading of a G only takes one.) The other S is typically rolling delayed.

EPTs tend to get over-used, and never seem to be used properly, in my experience. Generally, more internals would have been scored by simply arming it as an S and using the extra four points of power to either close the range or tractor someone.

One nifty anti-Hydran trick was to bolt an F-torp at each fighter at range 5. The gatlings tend to make the F-torp useless anyway — and leaving the fighters alive only lets him use them as plasma choppers.

KZINTI TACTICS

Read the Klingon section. Barring the UIM, anything he can do, you can do better.—*Cat Who Loves Drones*

TONY ZBARASCHUK, KZINTI COMMANDER

Double drone control is a big advantage. You can have 10 drones in flight during the first turn (four from racks, six from a scatter-pack). Follow them in and open up on the enemy ship after all of his weapons have gone to killing drones. Or precede them in and try to tractor him.

You have good disruptor arcs, making sabre-dance tactics possible (though, again, your primary weapons are drones). Save your type-IV drones for launch after you anchor him or for a "can't-miss" situation. Unlike non-tournament games, you don't have near-infinite reloads, so use your drones carefully.

Your phaser-3s have three uses. First, as reserve energy for your phaser-1s. Second, as amplified firepower after you anchor him. Third, as seeking weapon defense. Count up; you have the equivalent of two gatling phasers there, as much phaser power as the Hydran, in fact. And your phaser armament is very difficult to completely destroy.

The five transporters are a seldom-noticed advantage; you have hit-and-run ability superior to everyone but the Klingon. Guard drones and a tractor beam, and probably your ph-1-360s; this leaves five BPs free for offensive action.

KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

You are very weak on phasers. Only the Andros and Roms really have worse phaser armament than you do. (Who's ever seen a WYN or Orion TC without gatlings??) You are very hard to hurt with a Mizia volley, however.

Guard your scanners! You only have one "0" box. Your phaser-3s are useless when you've taken a scanner hit.

All in all, our group regards this ship as the toughest of the TCs to beat. The Kzinti does have some *very* nice disruptor arcs.

Your ship and the Hydran are very similar. Most tactics that a Hydran can do, you can do as well (or better). No one sane closes on a Kzinti; his phaser arcs are nice, and his phasers are *durable*, unlike a Hydran.

Remember to *always* arm a fake SP/SS. It's cheap and easy to do, and it may keep your scatter-pack alive long enough to have a chance of releasing.

Some ships are wonderful scatter-pack busters. The Klingon can do it at range 22 about 31% of the time (with all four disruptors). A hellbore fired at the right time can really mess your day up by blowing your scatter-pack.

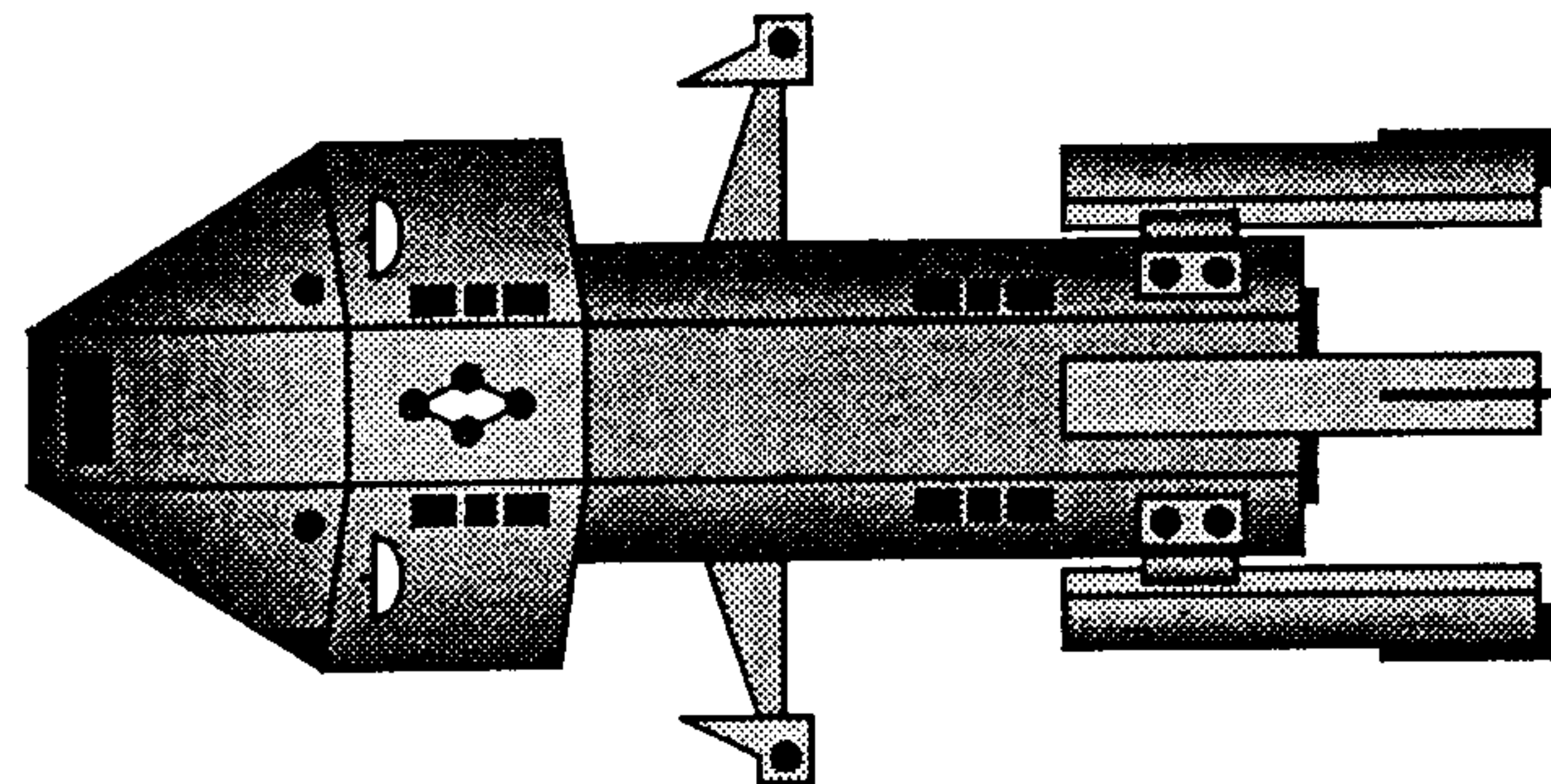
ADDITIONAL SCATTER-PACK TACTICS

1. Ballistic targeting can throw your opponent off if used properly. Our local Kzinti uses this tactic often enough that we can predict him on it. But *GAWD* was it a surprise the first time! (For the uninitiated, a ballistic scatter-pack launched after a WW is launched will *not* have its submunitions targeted on the weasel *IF* the weasel is destroyed before it releases. Don't WW around a Kzinti who has read this.)

2. Load out your scatter-pack with one type-I-F, one type-IV-M, and three type-I-M drones. He *knows* you've got a type-IV in there as no one who unloads an SP for reloads will unload only one drone. This is also useful against an Andro who sets his T-bomb for size class 7 — the fast drone will likely as not sweep the bomb for the rest of them.

3. Prepare dummy scatter-packs and dummy suicide shuttles (same thing). If he wastes his shot on an empty shuttle, you've probably just won the game.

Another loadout that I often use in my scatter-pack is one type-I-F, one type-IV-M, and three type-I-M drones. This is good for sweeping the Andromedan mine and may get enough separation that the WW explosion period will run out before the *BIG* damage hits. It is also (sometimes) worth it to make the fast drone the type-IV or to load out a type-I-F and five type-I-M.



RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

The Kzinti is tough to win with against a good variety of opponents. Its direct-fire armament is poor, consisting of a mere four phaser-1s and four "normal" (un-UIM-assisted) disruptors. Of course, the disruptors can fire in 180° arcs, an advantage over the Klingon, enabling the ship to fire even when in retreat, but this is a comparatively minor ability. The real advantage of the Kzinti ship is in its drones, but they are very difficult to use effectively against a good opponent. And when you are out of drones, the game is essentially over.

The first thing to remember is not to launch your drones frivolously. Never launch your drones just because they're there. There are only four good reasons to use your drones in a tournament: (1) as a decisive blow when you know your opponent cannot stop them, (2) as part of a large drone wave you're building up to overwhelm your enemy, (3) as a defensive measure to prevent pursuit, and (4) to lessen your enemy's firepower or maneuverability.

The obvious use is #1, when your enemy is out of weapons and is moving too slowly to avoid your drones. Unfortunately, while ideal, this seldom happens in tournaments, especially against skilled opponents. However, it does point out that you should try to keep track of your enemy's power allocation. If you determine, through your records, that he has no energy in his phaser capacitors, now would be a good time for a drone launch. At the very least, the threat of drones still in your racks forces him to keep his speed up and some weapons unfired.

Tactic #2, the drone wave, is another obvious use of drones. Anyone can build up a good wave by launching four drones near the end of a turn and four more at the beginning of the next. Using the scatter-pack is another way to start a nice wave. The problem is that massed drone groups attract weasels and cloaks and are (in the case of the Andromedan) vulnerable to the T-bomb. Also, eight drones are at least one-third of the firepower from your racks; you can only do this three times and you are out of drones. Still, a drone wave is one of the best tactics for the Kzinti to use.

Tactic #3 is a defensive measure when a ship charges you, intent on overrunning. The Hydran is a good example, as is the Fed. Keeping large numbers of drones in his face will make him think twice, but be wary that he might sideslip around them. Keep in mind that a seeking weapon which HETs cannot move into another hex on that impulse, so speed-20 drones can often be avoided by speed-30 opponents.

Finally, there is tactic #4, weakening your enemy, which is perhaps the primary use of drones in Star Fleet Battles. "Weaken your enemy" does not automatically mean "do internals to," although this is the most obvious interpretation. Drones seldom

do internals (or, indeed, even hit their target) as there are too many ways to stop them. These include dodging around them, shooting them with phasers, cloaking, tractoring them, or using a weasel (in order of desirability to the Kzinti).

The last thing the Kzinti wants is for his target to get around his drones. This completely neutralizes them (at least for the moment) and allows the enemy to close the range unopposed. To avoid this, watch the impulse chart and time your drones' arrival at a time when they will move two impulses in a row. Or use speed-32 drones...but they are in very short supply!

Forcing the enemy to phaser your drones is also nice as it draws that firepower away from your ship, and he has to expend power to recharge the capacitors. Always keep at least one type-IV drone available just to keep him wondering; as soon as he's seen all your type-IVs, he knows just one phaser-1 apiece will kill any drone you launch his way.

If the enemy cloaks, this may cause your drones to lose lock-on. Against the Romulan or Orion, it may not be wise to build up a large drone wave or you make it all the more likely he will cloak. Instead, use just 2-4 drones at a time, always keeping some ready to launch.

A ship who tractor your drones is only prolonging the inevitable. By dragging them around, he is waiting for you to get a tractor hit and release them at an inopportune moment. Watch for impulses when he doesn't move but your drones do, and pick the preceding impulse for your alpha strike, ensuring a drone hit if you should kill a tractor beam.

And finally, a captain who launches a wild weasel against you is asking for it. As soon as the weasel burns out, send in some more drones. Eventually, he will be out of shuttles, and you can build up a huge wave with which to crush him.

And don't forget the Kzinti Anchor!

Your drones are the most flexible thing on your ship. They can change between scenarios to match your opponent, so you can spend your points more wisely. If you need more, you can unload the scatter-pack, or it can be used as part of a large drone wave. You can control 12 drones, so control is only rarely a problem.

So much for drones. This article was not intended to become a treatise on drone tactics, but such a discussion could hardly be avoided in the case of the Kzinti ship. If you can learn to use drones properly, flying the Kzinti ship will not be difficult.

Advantages: Three points to spend on special drones, up to three type-IV drones, a scatter-pack, numerous phaser-3s (a total of 12 phasers) for absorbing phaser Mizias and providing capacitor power, extended disruptor arcs allowing two of them to hit the L or R arc at any time, lots of AuxCon boxes for controlling your ship.

Disadvantages: Tied for the fewest phaser-1s of any tournament ship (discounting the ph-2-armed Andro), center warp engine can make you lose warp on the 7-track sooner, few forward hull boxes to protect against battery hits, only one "0" box in the scanner track (be sure to guard this system).

FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

Flying the Kzinti ship, the "Kzinti Anchor" becomes a useful tactic. You have the capability, in one turn, to have a truly severe drone wave (utilizing the scatter-pack). Also, all your phaser-3s become effective at the close range required for anchoring. With all those little phasers and your drone racks, you have a good ability to get in close and knife fight. Your drones will absorb enemy phaser fire (you've launched them right next to him; they move next impulse, so he can't lab or tractor them, and ADD fire is next to useless), allowing your direct-fire weapons to savage his ship.

Another initial tactic to consider is that of a medium initial speed of about 14, with a planned speed increase to 26 (to preserve HET ability). I would overload half the disruptors, placing

normal loads in the other two. This gives two points of discretionary power. I would then launch four type-IF drones timed to reach the opponent just as he achieves range 9, forcing him to use resources to deal with the drones instead of using those resources on my ship. The scatter-pack could have been launched previous to this to give me something to run back through after dumping phaser-1s and overloads (overloading the remaining two disruptors with batteries if practical).

When moving the scatter-pack drones out, it may be advisable to spread them out somewhat as an opponent moving at high speed can easily move around speed 20 drones, avoiding them completely.

When fighting the Andromedan, I would use a similar speed arrangement and disruptor loads but different drone launch. I would launch fast drones one at a time, separated by a couple of hexes so no T-bomb would get more than one. Launch two type-IF drones first to exhaust his labs; the last two would be type-IVF. I would put the remaining fast drones in the scatter-pack (four type-IF and two type-IM would be in there, thus one type-IVM would be in a rack) and launch it immediately, separating the drones as much as possible to avoid losing too many to T-bombs. I would want to maneuver in such a way as to get at least the type-IFs from the SP in front of me. This should burn all the phasers and the T-bomb; I can then easily take just the TRs.

Always know your opponent's lab capabilities so that you can exploit those ships with few labs.

When fighting plasma ships, be very careful as they will generally attempt to wade through your drones and anchor you (because you lack crippling one-turn crunch power). If you do get cornered, you should forsake arming your disruptors. The power is needed more for anti-tractor (and if he is attempting to anchor, he won't be leaving effective disruptor range).

GORN TACTICS

FLEET CAPTAIN TOM CARROLL, THOLIAN COMMANDER

Fleet Captain Carroll won the National Championships in 1990 flying a Gorn Command Cruiser.

The best all-round tournament cruiser in the game. If I had to pick a TC to play and didn't know what my opponent was flying, this would be my choice.

ADVANTAGES

1. Eight phaser-1s, two phaser-3s, two plasma-Ss, and two plasma-Fs pack a lot of punch. Very few TCs can equal the one-turn damage potential of the Gorn. Remember the words of Rated Gorn Ace Ralph Wiazowski: *I fire hondret pointz uf plas-mah. You die.*

2. Plasma and phaser arcs. One of only a few (perhaps the only other is the WYN) TCs which could fly backward and still have nearly the same firepower as forward. You can't chase this ship as it can lob plasma backwards and fire quite a few phaser-1s toward the rear.

3. The Gorn relies less on its #1 shield than other TCs. Sure it can bolt all its torps only if it centerlines you, but that is rarely the Gorn's intention. He can take the #1 shield being knocked down and still fight effectively as his plasmas and phasers bear through the other shields. A Gorn can lose all but one shield and still be able to fire half his plasmas and half his phasers safely hiding behind that one shield.

4. A two shuttle bay design allows multiple launches of suicide shuttles and normal admin shuttles quickly.

5. A nearly unified hull which gives the Gorn a damage survival ability almost as good as the Hydran.

6. Low holding cost of plasma torpedoes leaves power for fun things like tractors and special shuttles.

7. Plasma torpedoes are one of the best weapons in the game. Once you know how to use plasma, you're halfway to victory (flying the Gorn, Romulan, or ISC ship).

DISADVANTAGES

1. A poor turn mode. This is often offset by keeping up a high speed and by the fact that your plasma torps can out turn any ship in the game.
2. Your galley cannot produce banana pudding.

TACTICS FOR EACH OPPONENT

Andro: Your toughest opponent. Reinforce one shield and take his turn 1 strike. Then hunt him down and kill him.

Fed: Use envelopers and play "keep out of range 8" until his shields are weakened and you have reloaded your plasma torpedoes.

Hydran: Kill the fighters, Kill the fighters, Kill the fighters. Then kill the ship! If he doesn't launch fighters right away, you can usually handle the ship easily. Be careful around the Hydran!

ISC: A tough opponent. Running though a lot of torpedoes and the PPD for a Gorn anchor can work, but requires a judgement call. Reinforce shields on turn 1.

Klingon: Reinforce shields on turn 1 and take his alpha strike. Turn 2, kill his drones and hunt him down. Don't underestimate the Klingon: it's a very good ship and can beat you if you make a single mistake.

Kzinti: Kill the fast drones; outmaneuver the medium speed drones. An easier opponent to defeat than the Klingon.

Lyran: Force him to waste his ESGs, then go in for the kill. EPTs work well.

Orion: Depends on his option mounts. Force him to burn his engines for no gain. Should be an easy kill.

Romulan: Watch out for bolting. Easy to defeat if he cloaks. Just stay on top of him.

Tholian: This ship can be a real pain. The web caster makes launching plasma almost useless. Bolting can work, but you take your chances with the die rolls.

WYN: Lack of acceleration and HET should make this ship a easy kill. Its constant speed of 31 makes it a tough target though. Plan your initial attack run carefully.

Two things I almost never do with the Gorn or plasma ships in general.

1. I despise the "speed 29+ charge across the map" tactic. It leaves little power for tractors, special shuttles, reinforcement, etc., and your opponent is usually expecting it. I prefer a speed of 17 or so for the first half of the turn, jumping to speed 26 (leaving open the possibility to HET) for the second half.

2. Holding-G torps. I prefer to hold S-torps, which cost more to hold but don't require battery power to improve, or rolling S torps, which can be launched as envelopers or whatever on a future turn.

BRIAN MOON, STAR FLEET STAFF

ADVANTAGES

1. **RAW FIREPOWER:** No sane captain approaches the Gorn TC when it is at WS-III. With its legendary 'Wiazowski Attack' of 'Hohndret pointz uf Plazzmah' combined with its phaser battery, it can blacken your SSD in no time. The best way to achieve this is via the anchor; unfortunately, only an inexperienced captain will allow this ship to achieve the anchor.

2. **VERSATILITY:** The plasma torpedo is the most versatile of weapons. It has a variety of arming options, such as:

- 2A. It can be downloaded to save energy.

- 2B. It can be enveloped to strike a down shield not facing your ship.

- 2C. It can even be shotgunned to provide the ability to engage multiple targets. This has applications in the tournament only against Hydrans, with their nasty fighters. But their gatlings can whittle down plasma in no time. Cripple the fighters with phasers first.

- 2D. The plasma can also be turned into a direct-fire weapon, but it loses its crunch value. The bolt should be used after softening the target.

- 2E. With its built-in ECCM, combined with the general tournament EW environment, it has a good chance of retaining lock-on to a cloaking ship (the Rom or Orion). Damage is decreased considerably by the cloak, but a cloaking ship probably doesn't want any damage at all.

- 2F. Don't forget the pseudo-plasmas. These can be used to deceive the other captain into wasting firepower.

- 2G. It can even fire AFTER it has been destroyed! Quite a surprise to the Mizia-using captains.

3. **INTERNAL SHIELD:** The Gorn has 16 total hull boxes. This is better than most; it is equal to the ISC and the Lyran, and it is bettered only by the Hydran. (Also look out for the WYN, with its 10 cargo boxes.) With eight of the Gorn's hull being center, there is still a clear advantage once damage breaches the shields. This facilitates closing with the enemy.

4. **TWO SHUTTLE BAYS:** This is a useful feature.

- 4A. If you've charged up two suicide shuttles, you could launch both of them simultaneously during an alpha strike. Add two fakes that you've previously readied, and a lazy captain who doesn't lab shuttles might get caught off guard (lazy captains don't get far in the tournaments; still, if you don't try...).

- 4B. If you're going up against another seeking weapon user, you might ready two wild weasels. When your opponent destroys the first, you can immediately launch another from the other bay, within the Sequence Of Play of course. This may surprise an opponent — once.

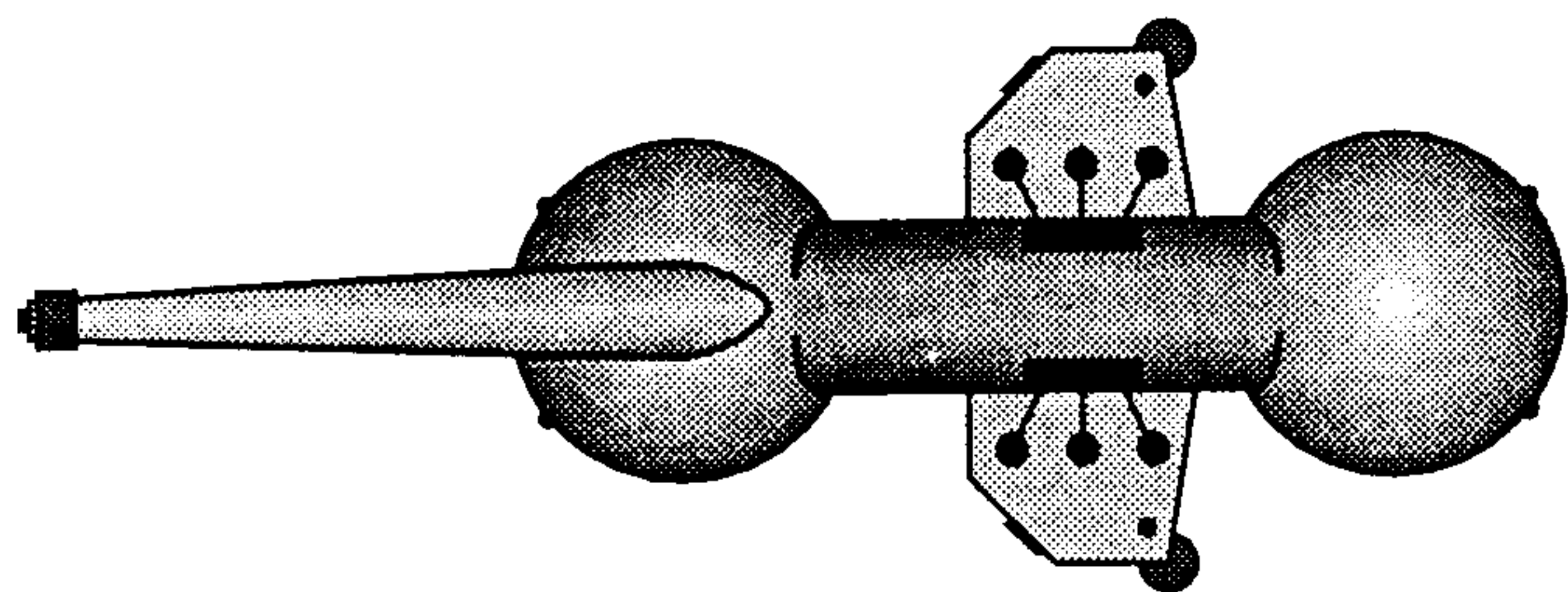
DISADVANTAGES

1. **ARMING CYCLE:** The plasma's biggest problem. Every plasma you launch that doesn't draw fire or hit the target is nothing but a big ball of hot gas. The Gorn captain must use his plasmas wisely and never fire them when he doesn't expect a solid hit. Pseudoes can help real torps reach their target. Prepare for every possible counter to plasmas, and ready a counter-counter. SFB sometimes is a chess game, and in the tournament you can't rely on your knowledge of your opponent as you can when you play in your regular group. Stay on your toes, and assume your opponent knows EVERYTHING. Chances are, he doesn't. But if you are ready for anything, you can take advantage of his mistakes.

2. **POOR TURN MODE:** This is something the Gorn is famous for, but take a look at the other TCs. It has the same turn mode as the Feds (!), the WYN (who is also penalized by not having an HET bonus), and the ISC. So it's not alone at the bottom! Careful use of the HET bonus, and mid-turn speed changes, can gain a maneuverability benefit.

3. **POOR PHASER ARCS:** The Gorn must use maneuver to bring its entire phaser array to bear. Overruns work well against most enemies to finish them off, after the first round of fire exchange.

4. **TRACTORS:** With only two tractor beams (on the TC and BC), the Gorn is denied a good way to defend against drones. And using them for that purpose costs the Gorn his chance to anchor his opponent. Not using them means the Gorn must use two more phasers to knock out a drone swarm that threatens him. This just points out the horrible lack of drone defenses of the Gorn. Tactics here include wild weasels and preemptive strikes launched from 9-15 hexes range.



KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

Gorns, and plasma ships in general, are *deadly* on tournament maps.

Winning with the Gorn is similar to winning with the Fed: Close the map down on your opponent. A Gorn is both better and worse at this than the Fed is. The Gorn has considerably more power to use for movement than the Fed does. Using rolling delays on the plasma, four points for ship maintenance, and four points for specialty shuttles and tractor beams leaves this ship with 26 points of power for movement and re-enforcement. It can chase down nearly anyone.

The weak point of the Gorn TC is firing arcs in general. To get its full alpha strike off, it *has* to centerline its opponent. If your opponent kills your #1 shield, you've just lost half of your effective firepower.

You will not win with a Gorn by letting your opponent get behind you. To prevent this, you need to be the "Fastest Lizard in the Galaxy." If you control the center of the map and keep a higher speed than your opponent, you will eventually run him into the corner of the map and then kill him. (Think of a big hulking lizard with a *BIG* club, and a Bob Johnson sprint...)

To kill a Gorn in a disruptor ship, you have to second guess your opponent. You need to know when *not* to arm disruptors so that you can get extra movement, and you need to concentrate your fire on one shield.

To kill a Gorn in a photon or hellbore ship, the oblique approach is best. That way you (hopefully) have only half his firepower to face at once. (Note to Feds: you can eat 50 points of plasma far more easily than he can eat 64 points of photons.)

To kill a Gorn in another plasma ship, you need to specialize in the ship — either the oblique plasma approach of the Rom or long-range PPD fire of the ISC.

FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

Let's carefully distinguish the Gorn ship from the other members of the "plasma" class (Romulan, ISC). In contrast to the Romulan, it is a much larger ship that takes internal hits well. It has more phaser firepower (albeit spread around the ship). Its plasma arcs cause a different mode of play. You can fire at least some plasma into any arc. That compensates for lesser mobility, but causes careful planning to be able to make best use of your plasmas. You must make absolutely certain that you do not get caught without plasma. You can't hide with the cloak like the Romulan can. Too many Gorns have been defeated because they piecemeal launched their plasmas (a stupid thing to do). This allows the opponent to phaser some, use shield reinforcement against others, and take each on a different shield. He (or she!) can then run your butt down and kick it.

But, you scream, if I launch several torpedoes, my opponent will just weasel!! Ahhh, this may be just what you want. If you can get your opponent to weasel, you can move away and rearm plasmas. Your opponent will have surrendered the initiative.

What might you do? A tactical plan to take advantage of the plasma arcs of the Gorn would be to scream across the map at high speed (31), holding the S-torps as Gs. This leaves a point of energy for a weasel or something. At a suitable range (you prob-

ably want to avoid range 8 on most ships, except another plasma ship), launch both S-torps (real) and turn away (fire phasers if inside range 8). Most opponents plot a slow first half of turn 1 speed. If they choose to outrun your plasmas, they will be caught against a board edge by torpedoes between 10 and 15 strength. Two of those will eat a shield. If they choose to eat your S-torps (perhaps after phasering and using some reinforcement), the arcs on your F-torps allow you to dump them out the back at them! You may put a pseudo in the initial dump if you're a cautious player. This probably won't work too well against the Hydran (lots of phaser shots).

Don't ever forget two-turn F torps from the S-launchers. They can surprise many an opponent, and especially at close range, two F-torps *now* can be much better than two S-torps next turn (there may not be a next turn!).

Because of the reduced maneuverability of the Gorn ship, you will need to make careful use of speed changes to downshift and temporarily gain a better turn mode. Don't speed change without reason, however.

Carefully consider the enveloper tactic. Against certain enemy vessels, removing shields all over is better than removing one shield. If, by some miracle, you've hit the enemy with two fresh envelopers, and he's hosed, your F-torps and strong phaser array will toast him. Later on, he'll not have a strong shield to use against you.

TONY ZBARASCHUK, KZINTI COMMANDER

As a Kzinti, I *loved* seeing Gorns fire two EPT-S-torpedoes at me. I just phasered them, lost my shields, and headed in for an anchor. (Enveloping S-torps eat *lots* of power that should have gone for movement.)

The tactic of holding G-torps in your launchers (and then upgrading them to S-torps with reserve power on the impulse of launch) is very handy. It gives you two more points of power for movement and is more power efficient than rolling delay or holding S-torps. You do, of course, give up the ability to arm your torpedoes as EPTs, which can sometimes be useful.

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

Flying the Gorn ship is like flying the Rom...except you don't have the cloak, your turn mode is worse, and your plasma arcs are harder to employ. This may make the Gorn sound like a poor ship, but it isn't.

The Gorn ship has several strengths over the Romulan. For one thing, it has more phasers. In fact, it has as many phaser-1s as any tournament ship in the game (8), although it should be noted that it can get a maximum of six of them in arc at any given moment. It also has two phaser-3s to use as phaser padding, although it is difficult to get both of them to bear at once.

Another advantage is the apparently weaker plasma arcs. The combination of LS and RS plasma-Fs and LP/RP plasma-S torpedoes makes it all but impossible to fire all the plasmas in a single volley. However, truly skilled tournament players have come to learn that firing all one's plasmas (unless assured of a clear victory) is tantamount to suicide. This is especially true of the Gorn, who cannot fade into cloak as the Romulan can. The Gorn ship is ideally suited for this sort of role, for it can launch a plasma torpedo from literally any facing.

The Gorn player, then, must become a master of the plasma ballet. He must launch his torpedoes in waves sufficient to keep opponents away (enveloping S-torpedoes are excellent for this purpose). The F-torpedoes should be kept unused for dealing with players who attempt to close range on your rearming turns, and batteries should be employed to fast-load as necessary. If your opponent attempts to close range with you, you can fire a torpedo at him regardless of the direction of his approach. And

best of all, you can lose just about any shield you wish, and no matter how you turn, some of your plasmas will still be in arc.

One other hidden advantage of this ship is the center hull. The Romulan has seven forward hull to guard its batteries (necessary for fast-loads and rolling delays), while the Gorn has four forward hull and eight center hull for a total of 12. This means the Gorn can take more internals before it begins to suffer from battery loss.

ADVANTAGES: Plasma arcs have their uses, as many phasers as any other tournament ship, can almost always keep a strong shield towards its opponent, has center hull to help protect the batteries and other key ship systems.

DISADVANTAGES: Turn mode is miserable (turn mode D, weakest in the tournament and equal to the WYN and ISC), no cloak to hide with during rearming turns, phaser-1s can be destroyed from any direction, plasma ballet tactic makes the ship hard to master.

THOLIAN TACTICS

FLEET CAPTAIN TOM CARROLL, THOLIAN COMMANDER

ADVANTAGES

1. The web caster. A very useful weapon both offensively and defensively.
2. A good turn mode.
3. Seven phaser-1s and six phaser-3s gives it a nice phaser punch.
4. Good weapons are protected. The snare protects the web caster, a few phaser-3s will protect the phaser-1s, and disrupters are easy to repair (to range 10). So even a good volley of internals will still leave the Tholian in fighting form.
5. Ability to fly through your own web is a great advantage.

DISADVANTAGES

1. A very power hungry ship. Trying to load phasers, web caster, and disrupters all at once can leave you at a very low speed. The choice, therefore, is to go without the disrupters as they are the least important weapon on your ship.
2. Difficult to deal with a lot of drones. Using the web caster, snare, and phasers to deal with all the drones a Kzinti can put out will usually leave you with little to fire at his ship and his second turn drones.

The most important fact about the Tholian TC is that you must be able to employ the web caster in both casting and fist modes. More people have been taking the ship lately because it looks powerful, but since they don't understand how to use the web caster properly, they lose. This, of course, is true of other TCs too.

TONY ZBARASCHUK, KZINTI COMMANDER

At GenCon 91, I met four Tholians in the tournament and killed all four (while flying a Kzinti). It is difficult for the Tholian to deal with drones since (unlike plasmas) they are not weakened by time spent in the web, and unless you maneuver *very* well, drones can dodge around the web in any case. One other note: none of the Tholians I faced used their snare.

You *must* maneuver well with the Tholian. The web caster is the only thing that prevents you from being over-run (much as the SP serves for Klingons and Kzintis, or the ESG for the Lyran). Don't use it in direct-fire mode unless you really have the enemy on the rocks.

KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

There are two schools that we've found on the Tholian TC.

One school treats it as a Klingon with better phasers and an extra overloaded disruptor with no maximum range, and flies it as such. While this ship can't out-bluster a Fed at range 4, it can snipe like nothing else in the tournament fleet. Hitting with all four disruptors and the web fist at range 15 does 20 points of damage, for a net cost of 13 power. This is comparable to four overloaded disruptors at range 8 with 16 points of power.

The other school of thought is to use it in a defensive fight by throwing web hexes all over the place and hiding behind them. This works especially well against the plasma end of the Galaxy.

Prediction: The Neo-Tholian with web fist will win at Origins, and sometime *soon*.

Phaser Suite: This ship has the best phaser armament and array of any TC. Period. Only the Fed, Gorn, and Lyran have more phaser-1s. Only the Kzinti and Hydran have more phaser-3s (counting phaser-Gs as phaser-3s).

Turn Mode: Same turn mode as the Klingon, and generally enough power to use a 21/15 split (half of the turn at speed 21, half at 15) or better. It can out-fly most opponents.

Heavy Weapons: The web fist as a heavy weapon is in the rawest sense, an overloaded disruptor without the range 8 limitation. A Tholian deciding to "sabre dance" can strip off an impressive amount of shielding at range 15. And with lucky phaser volleys, the Tholian can even score internals at that range through a rear shield or PA panel.

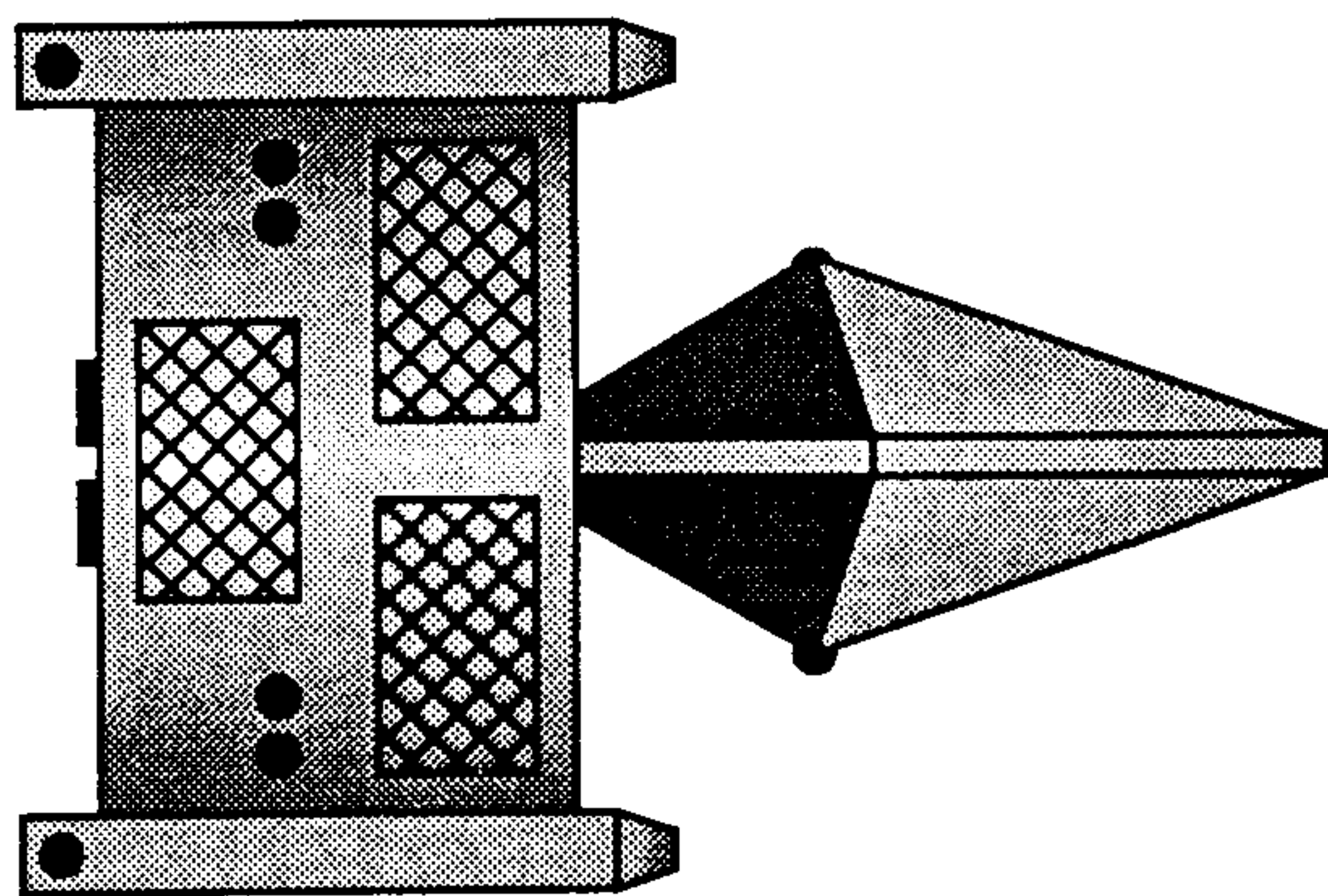
Defensive Weapons: The web is the best anti-Romulan device ever made. It stops plasmas. It uncloaks ships. It holds them in place to nail them with phasers. It does everything but clean the coffeepot. (Although they're working on that...) With the snare and decent timing, you are virtually drone proof. It can be used to buy time to kill the bloody things. Using the web caster to lay web is a surefire way to stop drones.

Web Tactics: When firing the snare to capture plasmas (or drones), wait until the plasma is two hexes away from you, then let loose the snare on the OPPOSITE side, slip into the web hex on the next impulse (plasma is now two hexes from the web), turn out of it next impulse (plasma is now one hex from the web), then move straight so the web is facing your #4 shield. (Plasma is now in web hex, which solidifies and traps the plasma. You also have your phaser hose to kill it with if you feel like it.)

FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

Will the Neo-Tholian TC win the Fleet Captain's Tournament soon? That depends on whether or not highly skilled players are willing to invest the time to learn how to operate it effectively. It is an easy ship to lose with. I would like to somewhat disagree with Ken Burnside on his mention of the Tholian's phaser battery and his discussion of its sabre dancing ability. Off centerline in the FA arc, only five phaser-1s and one phaser-3 are in arc. As the Tholian's opponent, I would approach from this direction (either with my ship or with my seeking weapons). If you want to bring other phasers to bear, you will need to turn. Yes, the Tholian ship has lots of phasers (13 total), but they don't all fire into large arcs (like the ISC's do, etc.). Employing them takes skill.

My other point is that there is almost no room for sabre dancing in the tournament. I approach you at moderate speed on turn 1 with some shield reinforcement. Your turn 1 mid-range damage does negligible shield hits. Next turn I can pin you to a board edge. Initial employment of the web caster should be for cast web. Later on, when the opponent is up close and personal and moving slowly, you may use it as a fist. Don't ever forget the ability of the cast web to seriously alter an enemy's movement. If it is of sufficient strength, it would force expenditure of the HET bonus if it were rammed.



Finally, I would like to mention a potential tactical use for the cast web. When approaching the enemy on turn 1, a four-hex long web "tunnel," in a straight line away from you, should be cast within range 10 (thus each hex is strength 12). This should be done about halfway between you and the enemy (or somewhat closer to him) so that, before the enemy enters range 8, you can force the "web tunnel choice." The enemy must choose one web side or the other, or may ram the web. (There is also a stupid option: lose HET bonus, give up initiative.) You choose the other side of the web. Timely maneuvering can give you an unanswered phaser volley through the web. Merely be aware that the enemy could ram the web to gain a close-up shot at you and move to prevent this. This needs refinement and testing, but should be valid in certain circumstances.

REPLY BY KEN BURNSIDE: Regarding Frank Gilson's comment about Tholian phaser suites:

1. Five phaser-1s off the centerline is better than the Kzinti, equal to the Klingon, and only slightly worse than the Lyran.

2. I've never had a problem with avoiding drones with a snare. Use the same tactic as with plasma. Yes, you'll have to allocate a phaser to kill the drones, but you now have 10 impulses to ID those drones, let your phasers recycle after shooting the enemy ship, or get about 15 more hexes away from them.

3. The web tunnel tactic can work well and is probably the best use of the web caster as terrain. Note that a very good use for the cast web as terrain bit is around the corners.

Drawbacks of the web tunnel are that it forces you to give up half the board in maneuvering room. The Tholian, like most other disruptor races, needs to maneuver and to snipe whenever possible. Setting the web as terrain can cut you off from the room you need to maneuver *IN* and, on a closed map, can make your life miserable (especially if your opponent is moving at a higher speed). He can choose to blow through your web in the four-impulse solidification period or maneuver around it. Against someone who *ALREADY* benefits from a closed map, why make the area to fight in more crowded when you need room to maneuver. (Having a Gorn on the wrong side of your web is a bad way to end the day.)

As to Tholians who don't use snares — *sheesh*. Use every system to maximum potential, whenever possible.

The Tholian is arguably the best of the direct-fire TCs simply through sheer flexibility and its ability to defend itself from plasma without losing the initiative.

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

The Tholian is a unique ship in any Star Fleet Battles tournament because it employs a weapon which can be used in two ways, offensively OR defensively. All other weapons, even the displacement device, must be used in one of these two ways but not both. The web caster, however, can be used to either block enemy fire or as a direct-fire weapon. The Tholian player must, then, learn to master the use of the web caster AND the web fist

if he is to master this ship.

There are several theories towards use of the defensive mode of the caster. One is to throw up a line of web parallel to your enemy's approach, thereby forcing your opponent to choose one side or the other. You can then close to effective range on the other side, fire at him, and get away before he can go around or through the web to shoot at you. The problem is, while this is fine as a theory, it rarely works in practice. The Tholian captain must be close to the web for his phasers to be effective, and by doing so he risks allowing the enemy to hop into the web and tractor him or blast him at close range. In addition, a well-timed HET can throw this whole plan into disarray.

Another defensive use for the web caster is to force your opponent to move where you want him to, essentially increasing his turn mode by three or four points. This is best employed when you are being pursued. Toss the web in front of you and pass through it. Your opponent must choose one side or the other to move or turn towards. As soon as his choice is made, go the other way, and you have shaken your pursuer. The web can also be used in this manner to catch and trap approaching seeking weapons.

The third use for the web caster is, of course, to trap an unwary opponent in a strength-12 web, forcing him to take damage and roll for breakdown. This is very hard to do. A skilled opponent will be able to sideslip around your four-hex-long web (it must be four hexes or less to be strength 12) or simply get through it by moving straight forward. He will also employ unplotted mid-turn speed changes to gain a hex of movement, enabling him to slip through the trap. Obviously, the best time to try this is when he has just turned, has just changed speed, and/or has no battery power remaining. You can also find success if your enemy is very close to the tournament barrier simply by placing one end of your web in a hex along the map edge, the other end extending out towards the middle of the map. This is an excellent tactic to use against a player who is "surfing" the edge of the board.

Now, on to the offensive use of the caster, the web fist. This weapon is very powerful, being able to do 10 points of damage all the way out to range 10. However, it is very power-hungry, especially considering the power requirements of your disruptors as well. Thus, the disruptors often go unpowered, especially when you expect to spend the turn retreating.

Many players choose to fire the web fist during the initial approach towards the enemy at the start of the game, hoping for good die rolls and a resulting weak shield, but some say this is the worst time to use the weapon in this manner. First of all, you are probably firing on his reinforced shield. Also, your opponent can now chase you down, knowing you can't afford to power disruptors and the caster in your next turn. In addition, you will be unable to cast a web until the first impulse of the following turn, enabling your opponent to plan ahead for it with an allocated high energy turn.

Actually, there is no right or wrong time to fire the web fist. If your enemy presents you with a convenient down shield, go for it! This is not very likely to happen, however. If you reach the *Impulse of Decision* (impulse #25) and have not fired the caster, consider whether or not you will need it as a cast web on the current turn, or if you expect to be able to repower it on the next turn. If your enemy is in retreat, or you have a down shield, go ahead and fire it. The weapon can be quite effective anywhere on the map. However, don't shoot it just because it's there. Remember, the power in the web caster is not lost between turns and can be held for NO energy requirement. If you fire it, that's more energy you need to use to rearm the thing. Note, however, that you don't have to put the full five points in it each turn, as it can be powered at lesser levels. Batteries can then be used to increase its strength, or it can be fired as a less effective weapon. It can even be held and power accumulated over several turns, as though it were a multi-turn arming weapon.

The snare generator is another unique feature of the Tholian ship. This defensive weapon is highly effective against approaching seeking weapons. If a drone or plasma approaches from an aft flank, simply drop out a snare and turn the other way. The weapon will not be able to avoid the snare and will be caught, delaying or (in the case of plasmas) possibly negating its effectiveness. On rare occasions, you might also be able to employ the snare against the enemy ship (if it is moving slowly enough) or shuttles (if they will not move in the next four impulses). The snare also has another use as padding for the web caster, so it should always be guarded and repaired as soon as possible after destruction.

The Tholian ship also has an advantage in its large array of phasers. It has 10 points of phaser capacitors, the most of any tournament ship. This means it pays less power to arm its phasers after any long-range volley. The phaser-3s make excellent damage absorbers for the more powerful phaser-1s, and at least three of them are in arc from any arc except LF and RF. Seven of the phaser-1s can hit from the direction ahead of the ship, making the #1 shield the last one this ship wants to lose.

ADVANTAGES: Web caster, snare as padding for the caster (guard and repair it), plenty of phasers and phaser capacitors, phaser-3s bear in all rear directions to absorb phaser internals.

DISADVANTAGES: Very power-hungry ship (don't try to power disruptors every turn), web caster is vulnerable to the Mizia effect, only one Emer and one Aux makes the scanner track subject to a hit in any single volley (guard both these control spaces and the scanner track itself).

ORION TACTICS

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

The Orion is the smallest tournament ship. Even the Andromedan beats it in this category (75 internals to only 70 for the Orion). With this disadvantage, it would seem like the weakest tourney cruiser, but this is not necessarily the case.

The Pirate ship has several advantages. Chief among them, even before the option mounts, is the ability to double engine output. Using this ability, the Orion can arrange to have more warp power than any other tournament cruiser for just about the entire scenario. In addition to this, it has a movement cost of a mere 2/3 energy points per hex, as well as the best turn mode in the tournament AND the ability to make two high energy turns without fear of breakdown. (Further attempts have only a 1 in 6 chance of doing so.) The phrase "highly maneuverable" is almost an understatement!

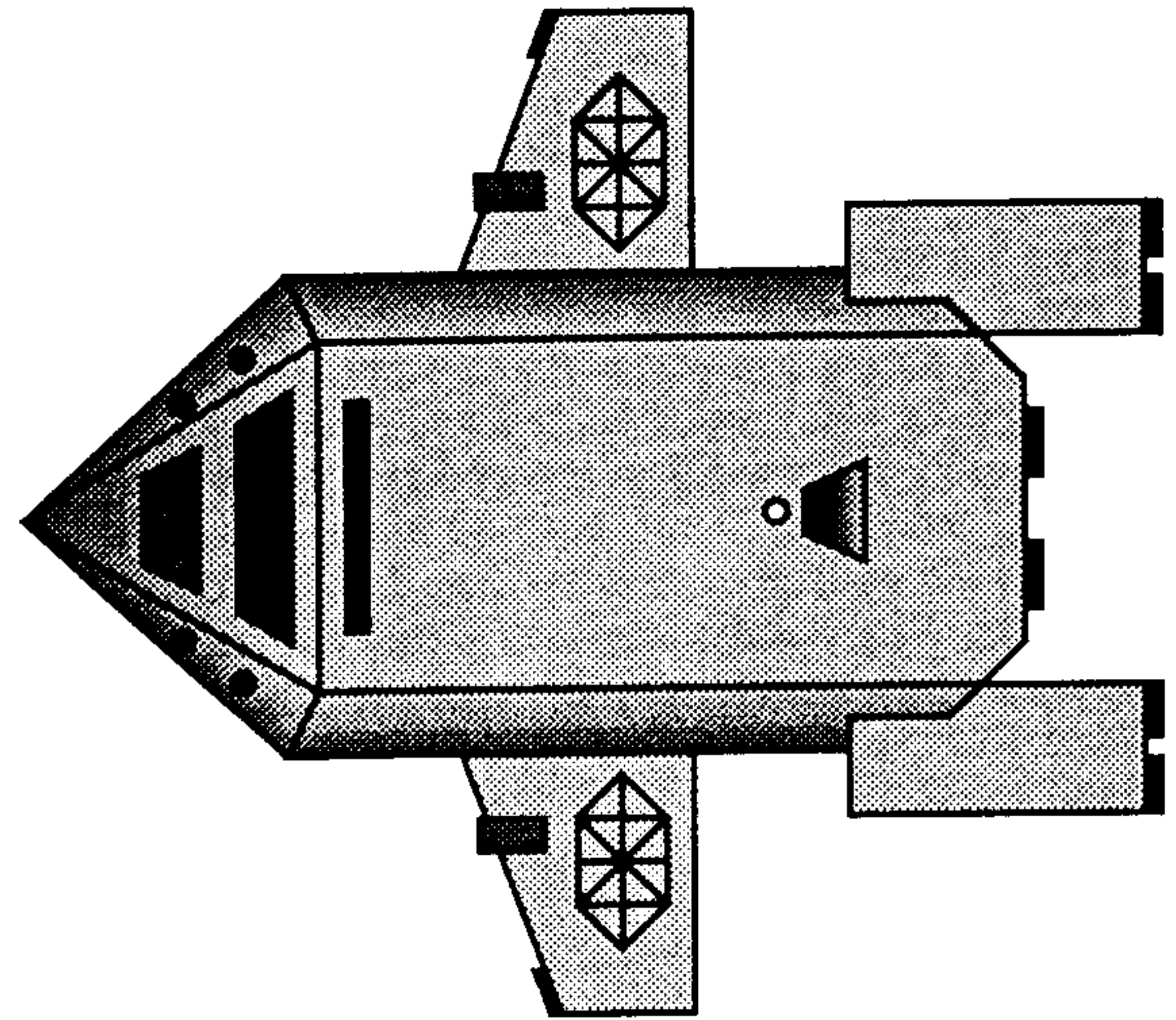
Engine doubling is so important that it deserves a detailed discussion. The Pirate ship can, for all intents and purposes, double one warp engine per turn for quite some time before the "cocaine" effect starts taking hold, so long as it takes no internals during this period. But how long can it keep this up? A typical sequence might look like this:

Turn 1: Double one engine for 36 warp power. This is the most power you'll likely have during the scenario, so enjoy it.

Turn 2: Double the same engine again for 34 total warp power (2x11 + 1x12). While doing this, put four points of CDR into hastily repairing (as an AWR) the engine box you lost on the previous turn.

Turn 3: Double the other engine for a total of 34 warp power once more (1x10 + 2x12). Put two CDR points into the engine box you lost on turn 1 (completing it as an AWR) and two points into the engine box you lost on turn 2.

Turn 4: Double the second engine again for 33 total warp power (1x10 + 2x11 + 1xAWR). Complete the hasty repairs you started last turn by using all four CDR points to repair the second engine box as an AWR. That engine is back to 12 boxes.



Turn 5: Double the first engine again; you now have 34 power (2x10 + 1x10 + 2x2AWR). Start your third repair of a warp box (on the other engine) as an AWR with four points.

Turn 6: Double the second engine, giving you 32 power once more (1x10 + 2x10 + 2xAWR), finish repairing the third warp engine box as an AWR, and start working on the fourth.

Turn 7: Double the first engine for 32 power (2x10 + 1x9 + 3xAWR). Complete repairs of the fourth engine box as an AWR.

Turn 8: Double the second engine for 32 power (1x10 + 2x9 + 2x2AWR). At this point things are starting to get hairy as you're out of repairs. You'll only have 30 power on the next turn, almost down to the level of a "real" tournament ship. But you have gone eight full turns and still have an excellent power curve, still better than any other cruiser. If you have survived all this time without taking any internals, you will probably win the scenario, assuming you're doing any damage at all to your opponent.

The above is a "textbook" case, of course, but it at least serves to illustrate two key points. First, the Orion should always repair his warp boxes as AWR to keep his power levels up. Otherwise, he can't last as long as he'd like to. The other point is choosing which engine to double. Decide how much power you need, and double the engine that gives you just that amount of power. If you have a 12-box and a 10-box engine, and only need 31 warp power, don't double the 12-box engine! Double the 10-box and save the 12-box for later. You'll need it some day.

Option mounts: Some say picking the right options are the key to victory, but I believe your tactics, power usage, and overall skill will determine that. The Orion can win with just about anything in his mounts, with the right person at the helm! But be that as it may, here are some thoughts on choosing options.

First, try to match your heavy weapons correctly. If you use hellbores, take a drone rack or two as padding for them. If you have torpedo hits in the centerline, consider fusions in the wings. Whatever you do, don't mix torpedo and drone hits or the first volley you take could halve your firepower.

Second, watch the power requirements of your weapons. Three photons are fearsome, but overloading them will be painful and may adversely affect your movement and other tactics. Two hellbores will be just as power-hungry. This is one reason that plasma-F torpedoes, as well as phasers of various types, are so popular with Orion players.

Third, if you use phasers, choose them wisely. Many players like taking two gatling phasers, but these are poor from a distance (what opponent you must face will determine whether or not you should use gatlings). Phaser-1s, as has been pointed out before, have the best power-to-damage ratio in the tournament, and note that the Orion can have nine of them if he likes, one more than any other tournament ship. They don't have the punch that a good heavy weapon has, however, and are more easily destroyed on the DAC. Keep this in mind.

Finally, use care when selecting your second option mount package. Take a good hard look at how your first package will do against each of the tournament ships. Plasma-Fs, for example, will have a tough time doing much to the Andro, and drones will be less than useless against the Hydran or Kzinti. Make sure you have an option package to cover all the bases. Obviously, playing the Orion is a job for a well-rounded captain!

In addition to the benefits of engine doubling and option mounts, the Orion is also highly maneuverable, with the best turn mode in the tournament. What other ship can fly speed 26 with a turn mode of 4? At that speed he can HET and still have four warp left over! This means, among other things, that the Orion actually has the capability to HET twice in the same turn. Only the Andromedan has the power to try this, but he only gets one HET bonus — the Orion has two!

Lastly, the Orion ship has a cloaking device, made all the more useful by the fact that it's so cheap to power (only 12 points, just half the ship's warp, not 2/3 like most cloak costs). This can give the Orion the ability to hide during a rearming turn, such as while reloading F-torpedoes, avoiding retribution until he's ready to come out and fight (with engines doubled, of course). See the various articles on Romulan tactics for more on the use of the cloak. The Orion should remember, however, that if he doubles a warp engine, his cloak cost is increased appropriately (by 6 if only one engine is doubled, 12 if both are doubled). Of course, doubling the impulse engine does not affect the cloak cost, so a turn of cloaking is the perfect time to consider impulse doubling.

ADVANTAGES: Ability to double engines, option mounts (two packages) give flexibility versus different kinds of opponents, good power curve, the cloaking device (be sure to guard it), incredible turn mode, two HET bonuses.

DISADVANTAGES: Tiny ship (fewest internals of any tournament cruiser), no stealth bonus, way too few control spaces (just one bridge and two aux — guard them, and watch those sensor/scanner tracks too), no forward-facing phaser-3s to use as padding (any phaser hits from that direction will hit "good" phasers), almost always shy on firepower relative to its opponents.

KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

JOYS OF THE ORION TOURNAMENT RAIDER

Maneuverability: Only the Andro comes close, and not very close at that.

Firepower: No matter what option mounts you take, it's not going to be sufficient to go nose-to-nose with most other TCs.

Cloaking: The Orion TC is a more efficient cloaking ship than the Romulan, in that it can maintain a higher speed under cloak, and its cloaked movement speeds will more closely match its turn mode.

Flexibility: The ability to set up two option mount packages before a tournament begins is the one major advantage this ship has over any of the rest. Unfortunately, it tends to be wasted, in my experience, by players who do not think it through.

OPTION MOUNT SELECTIONS

Orions, when selecting option mounts, should consider several things:

1. Do you actually plan on cloaking during the game?

2. Do you *need* to cloak to rearm?

3. What kind of game do you intend to play? The Gorn Anchor? The Fed range-4 "great mace in the face"? Sabre-dancing at range 15?

4. How much power can be spared and still move the ship 18 to 21 hexes without doubling engines?

One option mount package that's been much praised is the two phaser-G & three fusion beam package. When you aren't cloaking, you're doubling engines, overloading fusions, and

cruising in at speed 31, trying to get behind your opponent. On impulse #1 of the next turn, you have a good speed plot to get away, fade out, let your fusions cool off, and re-arm phasers. (This option mount package is jokingly referred to as the "Stinger-O" — you're flying a Stinger on some serious steroids.)

The Orion, next to the Klingon, is the trickiest TC to fly. It can be mediocre at anything. The trick is to be mediocre at something your opponent can't handle at all.

FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

Points to keep in mind when considering the Orion:

1. It is the smallest tournament ship. This means you can hardly, if ever, afford to take internals.

2. You will have fewer weapons systems than most of your opponents. This leads to a philosophy I will speak of later.

3. Without doubling, your power curve is pitiful (especially if you choose weapons that require power over several turns).

Knowing these disadvantages, let's review the advantages:

1. The best maneuverability in the tournament. Especially important is the ability to easily perform two HETs (even at speed 31), and a breakdown rating of 6 should more than two be needed. This advantage is not, however, as big as it seems. Plasma torpedoes and speed-31 drones still maneuver better than you do. But still, it is an advantage you must exploit in order to win.

2. You have the capability to have more power than anyone else, if not forever, at least for the turns that count. You must make this count! Through the ability to reinforce shields you temporarily mimic a larger ship. Your maneuverability can keep a reinforced shield facing the enemy. Don't take power-hungry weapons simply because you can temporarily power them. So what if you smash an opponent's shields and heavily damage him. If all your power is in weapons and movement, he's smashing you and you've got a much smaller ship.

3. You have some flexibility because of the ability to have two option mount packages. Incredible and great amounts of thought must be devoted to this. Playtest! Playtest! Know what option packages you will pick BEFORE you arrive at the tournament.

There are various philosophies about weapons choice and playing style. These philosophies are mutually reinforcing.

If you choose fusions in the wings, you are saying "I WILL CLOSE TO DO DAMAGE." My philosophy differs because I feel that I need shield reinforcement when flying the Orion. Fusions mean I will beat my opponent over several turns (not in one blow).

This leads me to have only one choice for my wing option mounts, phaser-1s. They cost less power than fusions, do more damage from range 3-8, and can be fired more often. But, you scream, fusions in the wings protect torps up front! True, but if it comes down to taking internals where that matters, you've probably lost.

As for the three nose option mounts, my choice is not so clear. One favorite is two phaser-G and one phaser-1. This is the all phaser Orion. It can be effective. With superior maneuverability, you can dance by at range 5 a couple of times scraping a shield and later close on that shield. It does suffer when fighting a plasma or drone ship. You can't phaser down the plasmas, and in order to get to the plasma ship, you'd have to wade through them. You can phaser down drones, but that's all you'd be doing.

So, what about a different choice in these cases? What about three FP plasma-Fs? You do need to get somewhat close to use them, but they can do some of the attacking for you. Used in conjunction with the cloak, they can be effective.

I don't feel that the Orion will ever win the Fleet Captain's title for the simple reason that you must continually be brilliant to win with it. One single little mistake and you die, and no one remembers you.

HYDRAN TACTICS

RATED ACE JOHN HAMMER, HYDRAN DEPUTY CMDR

Power: The Hydran is particularly well off with 40 points.

Hull: Unified hull keeps the ship from being destroyed but cannot protect the weapons. The "7th shield" leaks.

Weapons: Hellbore-fusion mix is vulnerable to damage. The fusion beam is devastating, but only at range 0-1, so most Hydran tactics revolve around getting into this range. The phaser suite is very odd and most devastating at short range.

The fighters are a third of your firepower, so an experienced player will kill them on sight. The best tactic is to launch them only after he has unloaded most of his weapons, or launch them at long range and bring them into range after he fires.

The Hydran can afford to exchange massive damage with the enemy but cannot afford to exchange small volleys.

Basic Attack Plan: You will attempt to close to range 8 at the same time your fighters close to range 10, maneuvering so that your #2 or #6 shield takes the enemy's first shot. If your opponent has a reasonable probability of scoring internals at this range, you will fire your four phaser-1s, the fighter fusions, and one hellbore, then close for a shot at range 2 or less with phaser-Gs and the second hellbore. Otherwise, you can generally withhold your initial salvo until range 4 while keeping the fighters out around range 10 until you are ready to fire. Finally, you will try to end the turn at range 0 or 1 so that you can take a follow up shot with the fusions on impulse #1 of the next turn. If executed successfully, this attack sequence will leave the opponent ship a crippled wreck, or worse, and completely unable to sustain the second hellbore volley to come on turn 3. This is called the "One-Two Punch." It must, of course, be modified depending on your opponent's ship and tactics.

Let us examine the first turn's energy allocation. After shields, active fire control, and life support, you have 36 points remaining. A Hydran TC should never overload the hellbores on the first turn unless he is 100% sure of putting his opponent at eight hexes or less by the end of the turn (remember that overloaded hellbores **MUST** be fired by the end of the turn). Since you must assume that your opponent will attempt to avoid this range on the chance that you **HAVE** overloaded your hellbores, you will spend only three energy points on each hellbore. That takes you down to 30 points of available power. It is usually better to leave the fusions unarmed on the first turn since the damage/power ratio at most first turn ranges is too low. Besides, you can arm up to two of them with reserve power during the turn if you need them.

A very good plot for a Hydran is speed 26 with the other four points going into tractors, holding special shuttles, or a little reinforcement. Of course, there is no need to move at speed 26 for the entire turn unless you want to try to pin your opponent near a map edge, so save some power by plotting speed 16 for the first half of the turn and speed 26 for the second half. If you don't anticipate a need for an HET, you can move at 31 for the second half. Many opponents will also plot speed 16 for the first portion of the turn, so you will plot 17 instead, just to get that little advantage of moving last. Assuming that you want to be able to perform an HET if necessary, you plot speed 17/26 with the changeover plotted for impulse #18. This requires only 22 points of power, so you have a total of eight points, rather than four points, left over for miscellaneous systems.

Against a Klingon or Kzinti, you will want at least one wild weasel prepared until the scatter-pack is used. Against a Romulan, Gorn, or ISC, you will want at least two WWs prepared at all times, and having all four prepared at start is not unreasonable. Suicide shuttles might be useful against a Federation or WYN opponent, but it is rarely worth the power to hold them. You should put two points into tractors when fighting a drone user so

that you can deal with two drones without using weapons on the first pass. The tractors can be used to recover the fighters for rearming, or the energy might help against someone attempting to tractor you, and, of course, you might want to tractor your opponent. Transporters are usually not worth activating since the 2/5 power is difficult to justify.

You will try to keep your fighters at range 10 from the opponent so that you can recover and rearm them or use them to knock off drones and weaken plasmas. You should bring them into short range only when the enemy cannot destroy them before they reach range 2 or you are making a final, decisive, attack run. You want your opponent to waste long-range firepower if he wants to kill the fighters. Don't let him take them out with point defenses unless they will deliver a considerable simultaneous blow.

Against specific opponents:

Fed: You will have to fire your first shot at range 8 because too many Feds unload their photons at that range.

Klingon and Kzinti: He cannot hurt you without sustaining equal hurt. Your main job will be to prevent the Klingon from exploiting the range 3-8 bracket during the hellbore reload turns. A Klingon will use his disruptors on your fighters at long range if you don't force him to divert his fire elsewhere. The Kzinti is more dangerous because he can launch more drones.

Romulan and Gorn: Very dangerous since they want to get to close range and tractor you. Launch the fighters out of range and have them follow, or you may never launch them. Multiple range-8 shots can be effective here.

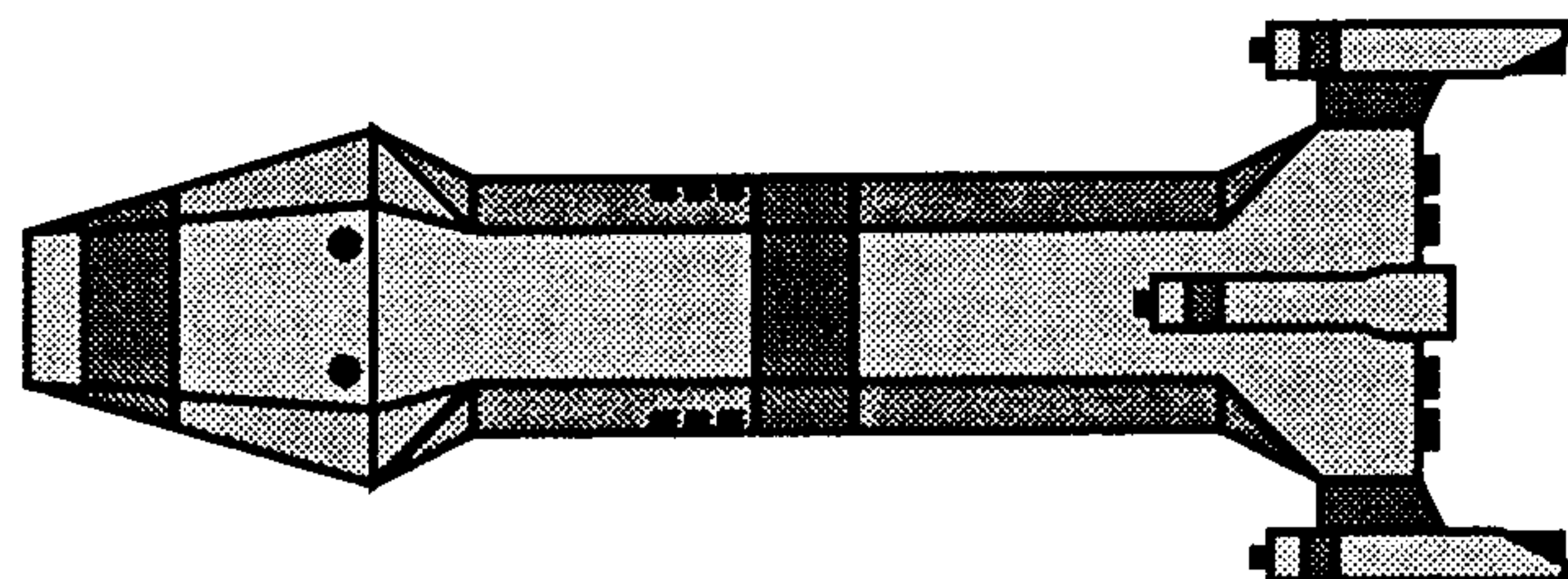
Tholian: Basically a Klingon with more weapons and no drones. Preserve your ability to turn and HET.

Orions and WYNs: Dangerous because they can run at high speeds and still have the power to tractor you.

Andromedan: Your single most dangerous opponent. You can't penetrate his rear panels beyond range 5 or the front beyond range 2. Run him against the wall and blast him.

Lyran: Always overload the hellbores.

ISC: Don't try to trade shots at range 8. Spread out the PPD damage across several shields.



KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

The Hydran and Kzinti are close cousins, as far as starship design goes. The unified hull on the Hydran is equalled by the redundant weapon systems on the Kzinti. The weaponry is radically different, but the tactics are similar — launch little toys to distract him while you close in for the kill at range 2 or less.

One thing that has *invariably* proven true of the Hydrans in local tournament play: If the fighters die before the enemy takes internals, the Hydran has always lost, badly. If the fighters stay alive and uncrippled throughout the game, the Hydran won.

Strengths of the Hydran: Durability, maneuverability (at speeds 20 or better, you're one of the more maneuverable ships in the game), your fighters.

Weaknesses: No long-range capability, and very little medium-range capability. You are incredibly vulnerable to Mizia attacks. Your fighters are about 1/3 of your firepower.

FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

I would like to emphasize several things:

1. Your ship is incredibly vulnerable to a medium-sized volley of internals (20 to 30). You can plan on losing 2-3 phasers, and you only have 6. You can plan on losing a hellbore, and you only have two. You'll probably lose a fusion as well, but that's not too bad. The important thing to remember is that if your blast of damage on the opponent does not similarly reduce his capabilities, you are toast.

2. Fighters. They are extremely important. As important as it is for a Romulan to know when to cloak, it is equally important for the Hydran to know when to launch the fighters. Frivolous or premature launch often leads to destruction. I have often seen Hydran fighters destroyed by the mere application of some phasers before they could have an effect. Because of the massive central hull and a good amount of other systems, the shuttle bays are preserved until quite a few internals have been taken. Therefore, fighters can often be held on board and launched after an initial weapons exchange. Two things are important to remember about this: You must keep the enemy in effective fighter range (tractor beam?). You must NOT be tractor'd yourself; otherwise, you cannot launch your fighters.

3. General points: Don't overload your hellbores on turn 1. What if your opponent avoids overload range? Then you lose them (can't be held)! You may or may not want to hold fusions. If you plan on firing them on turn 1 or 2, hold them; otherwise, those couple of points might be better spent on movement. Remember that overloading your weapons is less effective than the overloading of other torps (you only get a 50% increase), and that if you were to overload everything (assuming holding fusions), then that would cost 24 points of energy! Hardly affordable. I rarely overload fusions unless an immediate shot is available, I have the extra power, and the extra damage is crucial. Against a plasma ship you can hold your fighters on tractor beams, and they can still fire against plasma torps (G7.91). This allows you to cruise at good speed, carve up a couple plasmas, and make a good attack. If the plasma ship comes inside range 8, you may want to suck the fighters in to avoid losing them to phasers; they can always launch soon after anyway.

4. Cruise obliquely to range 10 with fighters out, and fire six fusions, four phaser-1s, two direct-fire hellbores, and eight phaser-3s (fighters). This is an average of 22-27 points. Against certain opponents, this can be followed by a turn of running (and reloading fighters). You've killed a shield which HBs will now be effective against. Be careful; a plasma ship can afford fair reinforcement and chase you down, pinning you in a corner with plasmas. Preserve fighters for crucial employment, but DO use them. Beware losing weapons without inflicting similar damage.

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

The Hydran is another of those tournament ships whose tactics are obvious, in this case the overrun. This ship has the ability to cause an AVERAGE of 145(!!!) points of damage at range 0 (overloaded hellbores and non-suicide overloaded fusions), and this isn't counting the fighters! This is enough to vaporize any tournament cruiser, even through a shield!

Of course, most opponents aren't dumb enough to let you get that close. The big problem with the Hydran is its inability to inflict damage from farther away. The fusions become worse than phaser-1s starting at range 3 (because of their power requirement). Only the hellbores are your saving grace.

The other thing your opponent has to watch out for is the fighters. These cannot be ignored as they can cause an average of 55 points of damage if allowed to reach range 0. Part of the key to flying the Hydran is figuring out what to do with the fighters; in fact, some would say this is *THE* key to the Hydran tour-

name ship. Here are some considerations:

The fighters do not have booster packs, so you might try tractoring them on your approach (so long as you don't go speed 31). However, you are taking a risk that your opponent might cripple them, and you'll death-drag them on the next impulse (assuming you move). Obviously, this is not something you do against a disruptor-armed opponent. As soon as you hit effective phaser range (range 5), release them, or you're asking for it!

One possible use for the fighters is as an initial shield-dropping strike. Launch them as soon as you start the scenario, and let loose with everything at range 10. The fusions will do an average of two points of damage apiece (remember that you must use two charges as one from this distance) for a total of four per fighter. Dump the gatlings, too, and each fighter will do around five points of damage (of course, you immediately tractor-land them into the bay on the following impulse). Kick in your ship's phasers and fusions for an average of 12 more, and that just did 22 to the facing shield, not even counting hellbores! (And who said Hydrans can't be effective from range 10?) Of course, it will be a long time before you can get the fighters rearmed to try this again, so you're giving the initiative to your enemy. This is okay against opponents who lack a devastating punch (a disruptor ship, for instance) but not against others, who will simply close to their range of choice and waste you.

Another possibility is to hold the fighters aboard and try to get your enemy to fire all his weapons your way. The Stingers only have to wait eight impulses before they can let loose with their heavy weapons, so if he's foolish enough to dump before impulse #25, you can get away with this. Don't forget the Hydran Anchor, which will hold him in place until the fighters' weapons are ready (not to mention your own). Even if he damages your ship on the approach, you can still win if you get the fighters out and he can't destroy or cripple them before they can fire.

The fighters are great for dealing with cloaked ships. Few cloaked ships can go faster than 15, so just fly the fighters over and have them sit on top of him. Use speed changes and HETs as necessary to maintain range 0 or 1. He'll have to come out of cloak eventually, and as soon as he does, let him have it!

Always recover the fighters as quickly as you can after they have fired their fusion beams. Consider powering a tractor or two just for this purpose. Rearm the fusions immediately as they can surprise your enemy later if he forgets about the Stingers. Even if you can't rearm them, they still provide a gatling phaser for no power, so repair as much damage as you can with the deck crews. Don't worry about losing your fighters to chain reactions; that rule isn't used in the tournament.

While the fighters are a third of your firepower, the Lord Marshal itself is the other two-thirds and must not be forgotten. First, it has an average turn mode (C); 20 is a good speed, as is 26 (turn mode 5 and preserving your HET option). Also, it has no problems with control as it has a handy third flag bridge that will almost never get hit during a scenario. It has 18 center hull (more hull than any of the other cruisers) and hence a phenomenal ability to absorb damage before losing secondary systems, such as batteries, APR, and impulse engines.

The fusions are mounted in restrictive arcs (LF+L, RF+R) and can only "team up" directly down the centerline; however, this gives you a choice when taking internals, enabling you to mark an out-of-arc or previously-fired fusion beam while preserving the ones you really need for later use. This is part of how Hydran ships survive all that their target can do and *still* close in for that devastating final shot.

The ship has only six phasers, and along with its combination of drone and torpedo hits (hellbores and fusions), this makes it highly vulnerable to the Mizia concept. Whatever you do, don't let your enemy get multiple shots on you through a down shield. It is worth risking breakdown on a second (or third) HET to avoid this possibility. Three 12-point volleys through a down shield could leave you all but weaponless!

The Hydran has 40 points of power, more than any other tournament ship (except the Orion with engines fully doubled). However, it can still be power-hungry. If it is holding four fusions and normal-loaded hellbores, that's 10 power (just slightly more than the Fed holding full overloads). If it tries overloading everything, it takes 12 points of energy for the hellbores and 16 for the fusions for 28 power! Obviously, the ship isn't going anywhere if it does this. The obvious time to try a mass-overload is when you end the turn on top of the enemy ship, so strive for this position if you can arrange it. And don't forget your tractors!

Advantages: Three flag bridge (the best-controlled tourney ship), two fighters demand attention from the enemy, two more points of power than the "standard" tournament ship, six heavy weapons, 18 center hull to guard other systems.

Disadvantages: Very vulnerable to the Mizia tactic, only four phaser-1s, no "bad" phaser hits to absorb stray internals, fusions are mounted in exclusive arcs, only two tractors (making it hard to recover your fighters and anchor your enemy on the same turn), even with 40 power it can suffer from power shortages.

ANDROMEDAN TACTICS

KEITH VELLEUX, ANDROMEDAN AMBASSADOR

The Andro is effectively the SMALLEST ship in the tournament. Once you kill the Andro's batteries, he is dead! Other tournament ships can still put up a decent fight after losing their batteries, but not the Andro. Using average die rolls on the DAC, you can predict that the Andro will lose his batteries with around 6 internal hits. (If this is the result of a single alpha strike, that means six hull, six battery, three left warp, three right warp, four phaser-2s, one TR, two cargo, two impulse, two AWR). As you can see, the Andro will not have enough power to walk and chew gum (let alone try to empty the PAs of power). Fortunately, few ships can generate that much firepower in one volley.

In some ways, the Andro can be seen as a strange Klingon. Like the Klingon, he must stay out of point-blank range by using his maneuverability. Also, he needs repeated battle passes to defeat the enemy. Unlike the Klingon, he has two-turn weapons and a 'shield' that covers three 180° arcs.

The keys to winning with an Andro are POWER and SPEED. This is true for all ships; the Andros bring it to a higher level.

ALWAYS TRY to make the first battle pass happen near a corner (with the enemy in the corner) and ALWAYS TRY to hit the #1 shield. If the enemy's #1 shield is gone, he cannot pursue you during the reload turns, and that is his best strategy

RATED ANDROMEDAN ACE ERIC PINNELL

Speed is CRUCIAL to the Andro. If you aren't making your attacks at speed 31, there is something wrong. Use mid-turn speed changes early in a turn to conserve energy if this is a problem. As the objective is often to dump as much power as possible, allocating energy to an HET is always useful.

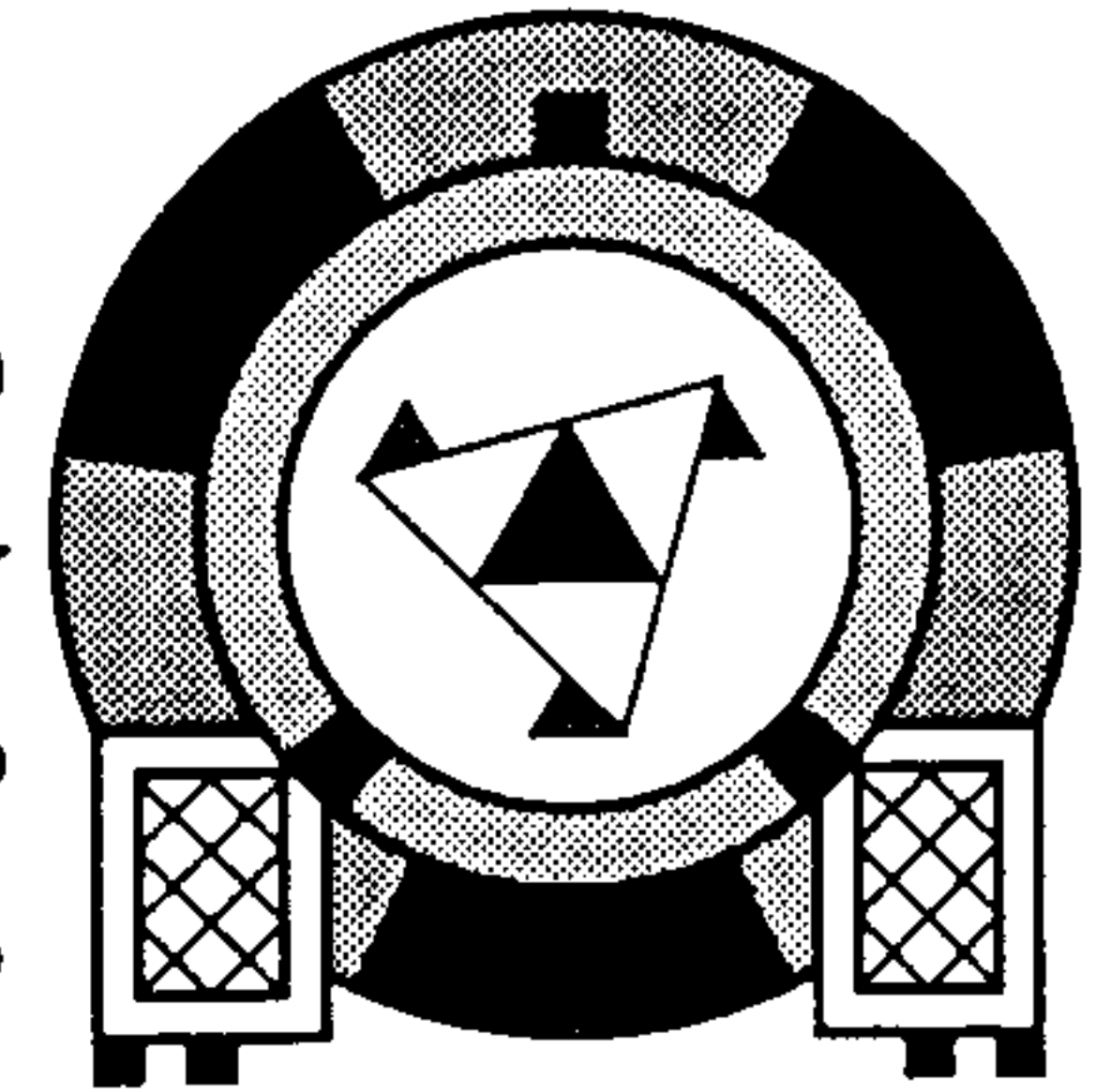
Hit-and-runs are an exceedingly effective Andro attack. Look for systems that the enemy isn't obviously going to guard. Sensor and Scanner boxes can be useful targets. Generally, most players protect their heavy weapons quite well (including drones).

The key to using the Andro is to stand back at long range and repeatedly hammer your opponent with TR fire. You can air your PA panels a lot faster than he can fix his shields. Use speed to maneuver to avoid seeking weapons and to close or increase distance where necessary. Learn to dissipate power quickly through toggling your panels from reinforced to standard levels. The DisDev should only be used in emergencies or to retreat. Offensive use of the DisDev should only be done when the enemy has exhausted his weapons (especially drones!).

Few Andros realize that the new rules force them to make multiple passes to wear down their opponent without becoming decisively engaged. Mid-turn speed changes can help conserve extra power, but when you are moving, you want to move at speed 31 (to avoid plasmas, drones, etc.). Dropping the front panels is a great trick. On the turn after your battle pass, burn your batteries into damage control, which will free up panel capacity in the front. Since your rear panels are at standard, you don't leak.

Against cloaked ships, you have a problem as your weapons are the worst for the "sub-hunt" attack. Your best bet is to use the T-bomb to gain a lock-on.

Against drone-using races, your #1 problem is that you cannot identify enough drones. The solution is to over-kill drones with two phasers and use a T-bomb if you have to take out drones that are packed together. If he staggers his drones, you'll have enough time to get in and out for your attack before they are all able to hit.



FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

ADVANTAGES

1. Second only to Orion in maneuverability. You have a B turn mode (equal to Klingon and Tholian). You can HET at speed 31 (because you've got extra warp power). You have a breakdown rating of 6, so you can probably get away with more than one HET.
2. Initially, your PA panels are better than shields.
3. Your new tournament vessel has more power and doesn't suffer a shortage like the old one.
4. Your TR beams are very, very nice.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Your ship is second smallest (next to the Orion).
2. Your PA panels now degrade, leak, and are far harder to clear than before.
3. You have no shuttlecraft, so no WWs. Your only defenses against seeking weapons are your pitiful phaser-2s and your speed (which is pretty good), and one T-bomb against drones.
4. You don't possess one-punch capability. Your battle must be one of many passes with the enemy, hitting each time. If you can get the same damaged shield more than once, great, but never count on it.

TACTICAL HINTS

1. Use your continuous damage repair as well as damage control to repair degraded panels. This is more important than using continuous to repair internal hits. If you reach THAT point, you're dead.
2. Go only as fast as you HAVE to. Extra speed wastes power. You may be tempted to fly around at high warp because you think you have the power. Don't! You'll need that power later (in your batteries).
3. Start with the max, 25 points, in batteries.
4. Generally don't power reinforced panels during energy allocation. Use batteries for that.
5. Don't make an attack pass just because your TRs have rearmed. Take that extra turn to clear the panels more fully. You must not attack if the opponent has a chance of significantly penetrating your panels.
6. If faced with a wave of seeking weapons, outrun them. If drones, kill them over a turn or two, using your T-bomb if a cluster of them shows up. Don't try to wade through them. You'll arrive with no phasers left and perhaps a drone hit in your panels.

That's just what a Klingon or Kzinti wants. If plasmas, outrunning them is your only defense. You cannot let them hit, and you have minimal phaser firepower. Remember, it takes a long time to rearm those things. DO NOT, under ANY circumstances, hop over a seeking weapon wave with your displacement device. Your device is too precious for that. Maneuver and speed must be your defenses.

7. Be careful to employ your T-bomb (and fake) in a useful way. Don't dump it just because you have it. Often I'll save it for use when an opponent has a down shield. The bomb can be used to force them to either accept 10 internals or go around it (making them either close with you or move away from you).

8. Displace for the right reasons, not just because it is an extra six hexes of move.

WARNINGS!

Beware the Fed ship. It should beat you in the hands of a good captain. There's not much you can do. Even if you can somehow jump from range 5 to range 3, off centerline you do about 52 points to his 72. That's 12 internals too many on you and only about 17 on him. If you try a range 5 shot with displacing and running, you will get caught. Last thing, remember you have good weapon arcs. You can do a lot of damage on the FH arc, so you may be able to brave fire and get a shot at a weaker (probably not reinforced) back shield.

REPLY BY ERIC PINNELL: Defeating the Fed means not getting close to him. Show up at range 8, hit him with TRs, then displace. Unless he gets very lucky, you won't take much damage. And if he only hits you with one photon, displace to close the distance and hit him with your phasers (especially if he has discharged his phasers). Never displace inward unless his weapons are exhausted. Displacement is much more useful as an escape mechanism.

REPLY BY FRANK GILSON: If I'm the Fed, I won't fire at you. I need to wait until you fire or until about range 4. If you fire at range 8 and merely turn away, I'll pursue and fire at your rear panels if you announce displacement. If you displace out of range 8 still showing front panels, I'll grin at your lack of escape ability and run you down against a map edge. None of this is guaranteed, but anyone is welcome to fly an Andro when I use the Fed.

KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

ADVANTAGES

1. Power: No one else can move at a constant speed of 24-27 while still arming *everything*.

2. Defenses: No other ship can take a pair of S-torpedoes on the "#1 shield" and only take one internal. You are not invulnerable, however. We'll get to that directly.

3. Offense: The TRH at range 5 is a never miss weapon, with an average damage of 35 points for the pair of them. It's also the only never-miss weapon at range 12. You are also the only direct-fire race with FH arcs. This is a small edge, but a crucial one.

4. Maneuverability: With a turn mode of B, the DisDev, and your breakdown rating of 6, you are nearly tied with the Orion for being the most maneuverable ship in the game.

5. Reputation: Don't scoff. There are *many* players who have never bothered to learn the Andromedan rules, who assume that anyone who *has* is "obviously" an expert. They lose the psychological edge they need to win.

6. T-bomb & Dummy: While these are useful, they require finesse to employ.

7. Reserve Power: Up to 30 points worth. Anyone who claims to have tractorated an Andro is bragging. (If he's telling the truth, he's got reason to.)

DISADVANTAGES

1. Learning the rules: This is the converse of point 5 above. The Andromedan rules give the *designer* headaches. They take constant studying and thinking before you can run with them. It's one of the hardest ships to learn for tournament play. (Not necessarily the hardest to win with, but the hardest to learn.)

2. Phaser-2s: These are best saved for point defense or dispatching a cripple. Against drones, they're all you've got.

3. Point Defense: With six phaser-2s, the Andro is severely lacking in point defense. (The experimental version with eight phaser-2s is better, but still has a severe difficulty in dealing with the Kzinti drone swarm or Hydran fighters on a closed map.)

4. Arming cycle: During the rearming turn, you're more helpless than nearly any other ship. Expect a disruptor opponent to capitalize on this.

5. Durability: While leak points are not significant in tournament play, you still have only 10 free hits, fewer than any other TC. You also have a severe vulnerability to Mizia volleys — three 12-point volleys will strip most of your weapons away.

6. Panel degradation: This is what's going to kill you if you aren't careful. Panel degradation is the single most important change in the new Andromedan rules. It allows a patient foe to whittle your defenses down.

7. Defenses: You cannot turn a fresh shield to someone after absorbing their overload volley.

8. No Tractor Beams: Need I say more?

BATTLE TACTICS

1. NEVER close to within range 5 for your first strike. Every bracket inside of 5 increases the chances of nearly everyone's heavy weapon hitting and increases the average and top end damage of the ph-1. You need to make two passes on the same shield at range 5 before you can afford to get close enough to consider using phaser-2s offensively. (Your TRHs are at about their peak damage at range 5.)

2. Speed. Live it. Breathe it. Flaunt it.

3. Never displace *into* combat. The four-impulse delay before you can shoot after displacing is enough to get you killed at close range.

4. One of the best uses of your excess battery power can only be done during energy allocation: repairing panel degradation. You drain four points from your batteries and regain two points of panel capacity.

5. Always start with your panels on standard levels. If you get hit hard enough in the front panels to merit reinforced levels, use battery to pump them up. The amount of power you absorb will cover the three points you used to bump the panels up, and usually add one more.

Ideally you should be running a 21-28 split speed plot and maneuvering onto a rear shield of your opponent. You should reach range 5 with your turn mode satisfied, moving on a course 60° off of that of your opponent. Announce intent to displace, fire your TRs, and jump out of overload range. Next impulse, turn away, and use that speed change to 28 of yours to *get the heck outta Dodge*. On an average set of die rolls, you've done about 11 internals.

On your re-arm turn, drop your front panels to re-fill your batteries. (Hint: Have your panels set on STANDARD when doing this. Don't do this around ships with loaded hellbores!)

Your panels will have to be at the standard (and dropped) levels for eight impulses. Time this *CAREFULLY*.

TACTICS AGAINST EACH OPPONENT

Fed: Get behind him and be patient. And know that you can take the range 8 alpha strike and *smile*.

Klingon: One of your toughest opponents. A good Klingon will do his best to control the flow of the fight and will *NOT* give you any breaks on the re-arm turn. Do *NOT* try for his #4 shield; that rear arc is not called the Klingon Phaser Hose for nothing.

is drones are a big worry as you have no way of killing the SP at any decent range and nowhere to run from his drones. You are usually going to be a hex or three faster, overall. Speed changes will be crucial.

Romulan: You have one of the best anti-plasma ships around, and he doesn't have the power, firing arcs, or maneuverability to deal with you if you get behind him. Watch out for bolting and cloaking as you run away — it's one thing he can do to severely mess up your day on your back panels.

Kzinti: Same as the Klingon, with the note that he has more drones, is more durable, but has much less firepower coming out his stern. The wider disruptor arcs are a nuisance, but only that.

Gorn: Same as the Romulan, except that he's more durable and has enough firepower pointing in strange directions to threaten you no matter where you are.

Orion: This ship needs to kill you in one or two turns at the most. If you can score internals first and can survive for three turns, he's meat. Be careful if he has hellbores as he can make your re-arm/panel balance turn unpleasant.

Tholian: This ship is fun. He can hide behind webs, but he can't outrun you and keep weapons armed at the same time. While you can jump over webs, you will more likely want to jump out of them. This is a crucial thing to remember.

Hydran: All in all, this is probably your most dangerous opponent. If he's smart and stagger-fires his hellbores on alternating turns, he'll blow you into scrap metal. Do not close within range 2. This is easier for you to accomplish than any other ship. His fighters are a nuisance as you do not have the weaponry to kill them outside of their effective range.

Lyrar: You can avoid the ESGs, and his phaser armament is weak off his #3 & #5 shields. If you can get two shots at range 5 against one of those shields, you might consider coming closer to use the phaser-2s. Your T-bomb is very useful against his ESGs and vice versa.

WYN: Get behind him. Be patient. He'll probably be going faster than you at first. Note that he has no SP and only has speed-20 drones. Most of his phasers are 360°, however.

ISC: Along with the Hydran, this is a tough ship to face. He is capable of sanding your panels into dust with the PPD on the approach. Getting behind him is somewhat more complex than is usual due to the all around plasma arcs and the wide phaser arcs. Very durable opponent; can stand up to incredible abuse.

Andromedan: Is the only ship in the tournament set that is not capable of destroying an opponent in one well-timed attack. Unlike the Fed or Hydran, who share his arming cycle, he cannot blast someone and survive the consequences. He *must* be patient and persistent.

JAMES D. BRADLEY

The most important aspect of the Krait is its maneuverability; in fact, it is the most maneuverable ship in the tournament (a bold statement, but I think it has even the Orion beat). Here's why:

The Krait has a good turn mode, equal to the Klingon and Tholian, and inferior only to the Orion.

With a breakdown rating of 6, it can out-HET anything except the Orion (which has two HET bonuses).

Once every two turns, it can instantly move to any hex within six of its current location (self-displacement).

It has a reserve power system that is vastly superior to anything else in the tournament.

This last point deserves special attention. With its enormous battery capacity, the Krait has the ability to pump all its extra warp (that which wasn't used for movement), plus a point of impulse, into recharging its batteries for a reserve warp capability that'll put anyone else to shame. Learn how to use un-plotted speed changes (C12.0) and you'll be the slipperiest ship around.

Next, we come to defense. The PA panels are both a boon and a curse. The advantages are that it takes a lot of damage to

punch through them, they convert damage into power for the batteries, and they regenerate at a much faster rate than Galactic shields. The disadvantages are that they take a lot of power to operate (compared with shields, anyway), each panel bank is responsible for defending half of the ship (resulting in total shielding equal to roughly 2/3 that of the Galactic ships), and when you have most of your panels full, having one panel shot out can result in a cascade effect that causes your ship to implode. To top it all off, the only ship more fragile on the inside is the Orion (which isn't saying much); 10 internals can be a major problem when one torpedo hit knocks out half of your offense!

So what do we do about it? Use that maneuverability to control the range and direction of the attack, and don't give an opponent an opportunity to pick on the same set of panels twice in rapid succession (like two volleys of disruptor overloads in as many turns). You can also flip the panels back to standard level after an attack run (assuming you had to reinforce in the first place) to distribute the energy better. This will result in better absorption to the batteries and faster dissipation. Finally, the most devious trick of them all: when facing away from your opponent at long range (greater than 8), with the panels at standard level and nearly full front panels, clear the batteries and drop the front panels! The energy will fill the rear panels up to maximum (standard) level, and the rest will go coursing into the batteries. If he shoots at you, you can still reinforce the rear panels to prevent internal damage, and you've just completely cleared your front panels (except for degradation) and recharged the batteries to boot! This takes a lot of coordination to do as you must make sure there is room in the batteries for all the power without over-emptying them (if there isn't enough room in the batteries, this move is illegal as it would cause internal damage).

With the new absorption rules (10% at a time), clearing the batteries isn't as crucial as it used to be. Always keep some space available in them. The only time you ever need a LOT of empty battery space is when you're dumping the panels into the batteries. Turn off most of the energy-producing systems during the reload turn, run the ship off the batteries to clear them, then do the Big Dump. Plot a very high speed during the reload turn as well.

Some players slow down on the reload turn. This makes drones and disruptors into a problem. Speed 24 works well and should be the minimum. You can generally get the speed advantage without much trouble, and you can maintain that speed pretty much indefinitely. (Actually, only about 8–10 turns, but that's usually plenty of time to finish off most Galactic cattle.)

Finally, we come to offense. The bottom line here is that we don't have very much of it. TR beams look nasty, but you only have two of them! Consider that the Fed TCC firing its four overloaded photons has an expected damage of 43 points at range 3–4, and 32 points from 5–8; at range 3 (the optimum), you can expect 38 points of total damage, 31 at range 4–5, and a paltry 21 at range 6–8. And the Fed has got phaser-1s against your phaser-2s. The key is to use everything else that's good about this ship to make the damage count. Maneuver to pick on one shield; keep clearing the panels as fast as you can; aim for range 5 (where your 4–5 TR bracket overlaps nearly every Galactic race's 5–8 bracket); avoid range 4 like the plague (converse of above); don't go for range 3 unless you are delivering a coup de grace or are SURE you won't take internals; DON'T get closer than range 3 — there's no need for it.

In addition, the displacement device deserves some discussion. It is a defensive system, designed to get you out of trouble, not get a nifty sneak attack on the enemy. Don't use it frivolously (it takes two turns to arm), but DO use it. It works wonders for getting you out of that nasty disruptor ship's overload range! And if you REALLY want to displace two hexes behind your opponent, think how stupid you'll feel when he HETs and blasts you before you can even shoot back, and then you're stuck at knife-fighting range for the next two turns!

The Krait generally need fear no drones. Since there is never a reason to go below speed 21, you're always moving faster than the medium speed drones. Generally, sooner or later you can "turn the corner" on them, and once they're behind you, you can wait for them to run out of endurance.

Fast drones, on the other hand, are a problem, especially fast heavies. They can catch up with you at any speed you're comfortable with, and your defenses are less than sparkling. Fortunately, only the Klingon and Kzinti have them, and then only in limited numbers. There are two ways to deal with them. If launched from a scatter-pack, they're probably going to be bunched very close together and you can nail them with the T-bomb; if they're rack-launched or otherwise well spread out, then you can probably pick them off a couple at a time with phasers. When fighting a ship with fast drones, do NOT use the phasers as part of an attack until the fast drones are gone! You will need them for defense. When all he has are mediums, fly around them and blast his ship with all you've got.

The most important thing when dealing with drones (of either speed) is to watch the movement chart. Pay attention to when the drones move and when you do, and don't be afraid to speed up a little (or a lot for a little while) to get the situation you need.

Reserve warp is the most versatile energy in the game. Having access to the full output of your warp engines on demand (during the turn) is a tremendous advantage that must be exploited.

In conclusion, I present the three cardinal rules of Andromedans:

1. NEVER displace *into* combat!
2. Be patient — time is your friend (even in the tournament).
3. Don't get closer than range 3.

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

The Krait is possibly the most difficult tournament ship to understand, let alone to fly successfully. Before you even think about playing a duel with this ship, there are three things you have to know. The first is obvious: the Andromedan rules! Take out the appropriate rules sections, read them, re-read them, and re-re-reread them. You MUST know how everything on the ship works BEFORE you try a tournament battle. Otherwise, you'll screw something up and lose because of it.

The second thing to understand is that you're not going to win the battle in a single pass. In fact, it's going to take you at least three, with a reload turn in between each pair of battle passes. This requires considerable patience and an ability to "look ahead." Your first pass will probably blow down a shield, your second pass another shield, and your third will go inside through one of the shields you dropped. This is the tempo you should strive for. If you can survive with few or no internals after that volley inside the enemy, you'll probably win the scenario.

Next, you need to understand the displacement device. The "dizzydev" is the one thing on the Andro that will save it from the seeking weapon races, and you have to know when to use it and when not to use it. Against a direct-fire race, use it tactically to get you out of your enemy's effective range after your range-5 shot. But against the plasma ships (and drone-users to a lesser extent), you need to be much more careful. Remember at all times that the device CAN fail to work. DON'T get yourself into a situation where if it fails, you *will* die. In such a situation, it will invariably fail and your ship will be blown up like an Iraqi tank. No one likes to lose because of one die roll! Instead, use your superior maneuverability and high speed to avoid your opponent, displacing only when you've been trapped in a corner and have no other choice.

If your opponent attempts to pursue you, you can use the displacement device and your low breakdown rating to avoid him. If you displace away and he HETs to come after you, pull a HET yourself and cut behind him. You then have the rest of the map to

cruise around in while he desperately struggles to turn around. Your weapons will be recharged long before he catches up to you again. (But don't forget the previous comment.)

A few other quick points to take note of:

Scenarios against the Andro typically follow a set script. First, the Andro closes to range 5 (or 3 against some opponents) and fires his alpha strike, possibly doing a few internals (but not likely). Turn 2 is a big chase while the Krait runs and rearms. Turn 3 is where you can win or lose. If he traps you in a corner and you fail to escape, you die; if you arrange to get his down shield with your TRs, you probably win. If you knock down a second shield, the game goes on but you have the edge. Use your maneuverability and the 180° arc of your weapons to your advantage here.

Pay careful attention to your battery power. If you have too much, strive to get rid of it through various means (reinforcing your panels, repairing panel degradation, use of transporters, recharging phasers, rolling-delay TRs, etc.). If, instead, you NEED battery power, consider your ability to drop your panels (either partially or fully) to absorb the power directly into the batteries; this can also be useful in emptying power out of full panels. If your enemy isn't firing on you, this trick obviously won't work; conserve power if you see him doing this, and don't get tractorated! If things get desperate, you can beam out your T-bomb and run over it (accepting the degradation), then drop the front panels and absorb the energy. (This won't work against a hellbore-armed ship due to enveloping weapons.)

Don't forget that you can fly around with standard-level panels and reinforce them using batteries if necessary. This can save you three points of power during rearming turns (assuming you want to conserve power).

The batteries are the most important system on your ship. If you lose them, you are dead. If you lose just a couple (in a moderate volley), repair them immediately. This takes precedence over everything else, even control spaces. (If you lose the displacement device, you'll probably die long before you can ever get it fixed.)

The Krait is more than capable of zipping around the map at speed 30 for the entire turn and still making an HET. You have war cruiser warp engines and lots of AWR for the DisDev. This is a significant improvement over the pre-Doomsday Krait. This speed will be of great use to you against seeking weapons, especially speed-20 drones. Try to run these weapons out of endurance if you can; you just don't have enough phasers to deal with them properly.

Don't forget your T-bomb. It can be useful even against non-seeking-weapon races. The best time to place it is just after your enemy has turned or HETed. Strive to get a down shield, but if you can't, you can at least weaken one of the others. The fake bomb can be used to induce a turn or sideslip by your opponent at a key moment.

Watch your damage range brackets. Range 5 is the closest you'll probably want to get. If your enemy gives you range 3, take it because your phaser-2s will be much more effective from there (3.5 damage average versus 1.17). Compare the improvement in your damage potential with the improvement in his. Phaser-1s improve by an average of one point of damage apiece between ranges 3 and 5; phaser-3s go from 0.33 damage each to an average of 1.0. There should be no reason for you to get any closer than five hexes from the enemy.

Advantages of the Krait: The DisDev, incredible speed, good maneuverability, breakdown rating of 6, beautiful power curve (32 power and 2/3 movement!), 30 points of battery space, 180° weapon arcs, a transporter bomb for dealing with scatter-packs.

Disadvantages: Panels degrade and leak, only two heavy weapons (very vulnerable to Mizia fire), no tractor beams, only six phasers (and phaser-2s at that), one of the smallest tournament ships, and that annoying 1-in-6 chance of failing to displace (which will probably be the end of you).

LYRAN TACTICS

RATED ACE GREGG DIECKHAUS, LYRAN COMMANDER

The Lyran tournament ship is often regarded as one of the weakest cruisers in the tournament. This ship has neither of the two important ingredients in tournament play: Crunch power and seeking weapons. However, you do have the ESGs.

Many inexperienced Lyran players feel that you must get an ESG ram to win. The Lyran usually cannot afford to ram an opponent. There are many reasons for this, but most important is the high probability of having your ESGs shot out before you get to effective overrun range. ESGs are best used as drone/fighter defense, an extra shield against hellbores, and overrun/anchor deterrents against plasma races.

To win with the Lyran, you must follow standard disruptor tactics, but take advantage of the large amounts of heavy phasers you have. A successful Lyran must know when he should not arm disruptors, using the extra power for speed to run away from plasmas.

Your favorite plasma race to play is probably the Romulan. Your ESGs negate the cloaking device, so you can take advantage of his weak phaser firepower on reload turns.

One of your worst enemies is the Andromedan. Unless the Andro obliges and takes an ESG ram, it is hard to penetrate the Andro. Consequently one of the best ways to handle the Andro is to attempt to run him out of power. Do not arm disruptors turn 1, and place all extra power into shields. On turn 2, chase the Andro at speed 31. End the turn as close as possible. On turn 3, overload everything and kill him. The new Andro will not run out of power as fast, so be careful. Your disruptors can leak through his panels and cause degradation, but I do not think you can do enough fast enough to make it a big difference.

KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

THE ULTIMATELY AVERAGE SHIP

If any ship in the tournament set can be called "average," this is it. It has average maneuverability, phaser firepower suites, durability, and damage potential. It has two subtle advantages and a secondary weapon system that is *VERY* hard to employ offensively. The first subtle edge is in power. With the exception of the WYN, Orion, and Andro, you have the highest discretionary power available (after paying the cost of normal functions). All three of the ships mentioned above buy their discretionary power at a high tactical cost. Yours is stable. Your other advantage is having two shuttle bays.

One advantage of the Lyran: It's a very simple ship to fly. No seeking weapons to worry about. It's good to start a beginner on. It has the advantage of most disruptor ships in decent accuracy for its weapons. This is an advantage in a long-term battle. A winning Lyran must make every battle a long term one.

Employing the ESGs takes skill. Many can use it, but few have mastered it. In general, it's better to kill a couple of drones with phasers and let the remainder hit a full strength ESG.

For sweeping mines, set it at range 0. This is how it avoids the Andromedan T-bomb.

I've often called the Lyran the "Cruiser the Feds should have built." At range 2, you can expect 17 points from an ESG, coupled with 32 from the disruptors. This is only 15 points less than the Fed TC delivers with a full alpha strike at the same range. The phaser-1s are identical, and the Lyran is a bit more survivable in damaged condition due to the even hull configuration. Plus the Lyran can do it again next turn with the other ESG; the Fed has to reload photons. With the Lyran power advantage, and a better turn mode than the Fed, it can usually control the flow of the game. As to the "crummy" turn mode of C — at a speed of 20

or higher, you have as many evenly spaced turns as a Klingon or Andro and usually have one more point to move with.

As to recharging the ESGs, remember that you can allocate power to the capacitor even while an ESG is up. This tends to minimize the power drain on charging it all at once. You can also set up a bluff with an ESG. You can announce that it's going up, but you don't have to announce how much power is in it or what radius it's coming up at until it solidifies. Use those four impulses to your advantage!

The Lyran has 40 points of power and weapons that take no cost to hold. Standard arming four disruptors for a dance step, four points for spacekeeping, and four for tractors and specialty shuttle holding leaves it with 24 points to move. If it needs even more power to move for some reason, it can decide to not arm a disruptor or two. (Phasers always come first at the feeding trough for power.) Always hold one disruptor back for a closer range shot; you lose nothing by firing a disruptor at your opponent.

TACTICS AGAINST EACH OPPONENT

This ship is deadly to the Hydran TC, which lacks enough fighters *OR* hellbores to threaten it. Any Romulan or Orion ship which cloaks against you deserves to die. Horribly.

Against an SP user, your ESGs, while not useless, are easy to overcome. You need to soften up his drones before letting them hit your ESGs. Regrettably, this means that your phasers aren't killing your enemy, but then he only has so many drones. The Kzinti is an easier foe to deal with than the Klingon, due to the inferior turn mode and power curve.

Against the WYN, your tactics depend on his mounts. You should be able to handle his full drone wave with no problems, even if he moves in with them.

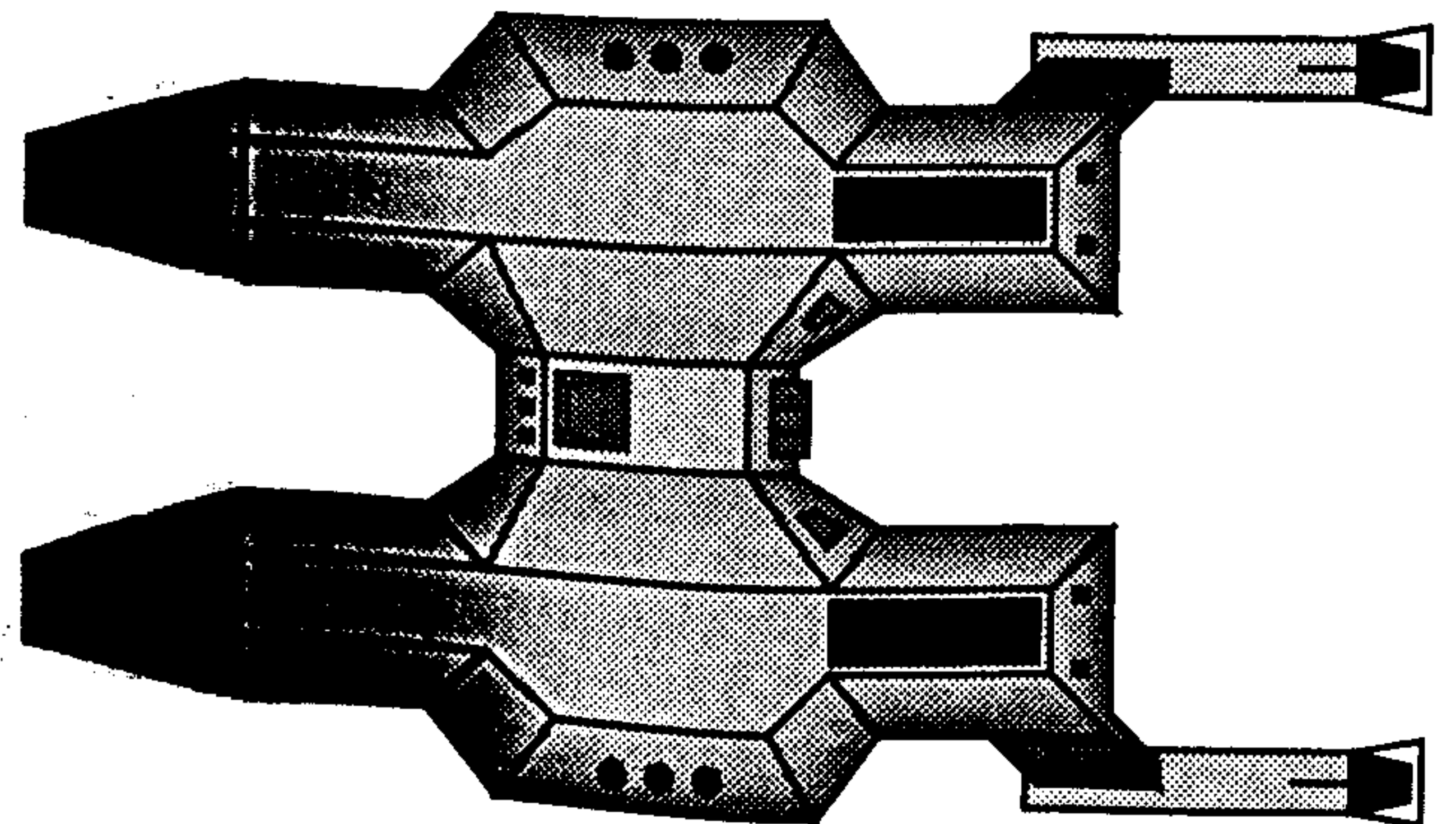
This ship has the power edge to choose the range against the Fed. Save the ESGs for a coup de grace, and fight it as a clumsy Klingon.

Against the Tholians, drive through the gap in the webs, be patient, and remember that your power curve is better than his. He'll beat up on you for three turns, then gasp for breath.

Against the Orions, his option mounts will determine your tactics. Your ESGs are a good deterrent to his tendency to cloak after firing.

Against the Gorn, keep a high speed and thank heaven your turn mode is better than his. It will allow you to make a few oblique disruptor passes before eating a plasma. Speed is more important than having an ESG active every turn. Use the ESGs, which hold for free, for the *coup de grace*. Similar tactics apply to the ISC, although the ISC's phaser and plasma suite is somewhat less threatening.

Against the Romulan, your phasers are better situated for offensive work than his, and you have more of them. His turn mode is the same as yours, and his power curve is almost as nice. He won't cloak and live.



FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

This ship suffers from the lack of special weapons. The ESGs are difficult to employ. A drone-using opponent can build up a swarm of 4-6 and crash your ESGs with the drones plus his ship. Since a couple of big drones will be in that stack, several of them will remain after impact, requiring you to use your phasers. Your opponent will have minimal damage from the ESG ram and can employ almost all his weapons against your ship. (You did power suicide shuttles, right?; remember those two shuttle bays.)

With the Lyran you have to make use of everything: two shuttle bays, hit-and-run raids from transporters, incredibly skilled use of ESG (more later), that extra little bit of power you should have over most enemies.

USING ESGs

1. Try scaring your opponent by announcing you're bringing them up. If this drives him into firing and turning away, cancel the announcement (you've wasted virtually nothing; just remember you must now wait eight impulses before re-announcement).

2. The hex jump. Try very hard to jump from range 5 to range 3 with ESGs up at range 3. This requires watching the impulse chart for an impulse when you both move and putting him into a situation where he cannot afford to turn away. Reserve warp speed changes may allow you to accomplish this even against a careful opponent.

3. DO NOT ever just put up the ESGs because it makes you feel better. Only 32 impulses later, they go down and your opponent smiles before running you over.

DEADLY DUEL: LYRAN vs. ANDROMEDAN

KEN BURNSIDE: Against the Andro, the Lyran must work for an edge. The Andro T-bomb won't do him any good with an ESG up, and cycling an ESG at range 3 will keep him from using his phasers offensively. His two TRs are about the same as your disruptors. In an attrition fight, he will lose. In a straight in-and-out slugfest, he'll lose badly.

JAMES D. BRADLEY: ESGs at range 3 will not negate the Andro's use of the T-bomb offensively. He'll wait until you don't move, then beam it to range 2 (inside the ESG field). Boom. Keeping the ESGs at range 2 will probably prevent this, at the expense of giving the Andro range 3 if he wants it. Or you can set one ESG at 2 and the other at 3 to create the "onion" effect, but this can only be done every other turn and at a hideous energy cost. Another point: what makes you think the phasers won't be used offensively outside range 3? Since a Lyran doesn't have any little toys to keep the phasers busy, they'll be firing every chance they get. Another 4-6 points of damage (assuming non-centerlined) per battle pass are worth it.

KEN BURNSIDE: As for killing the Andromedan with a Lyran, the degradation points you score with four disruptors hitting on four impulses at range 15 is not significant the first turn. It's of minor significance on the second turn. By the third turn, it's added up considerably and you can go in and pump him full of overloads. Then add in the fire from your impressive phaser suite. Then hit him with your ESGs.

JAMES D. BRADLEY: Sorry, but I have to disagree. While you're firing standard disruptors at the Andro for three turns, he's ripping your shields apart and probably doing at least one significant volley of internal damage (with a couple of minor ones as well). The ESG at radius 0 only stops the TB if you run over it; it'll detonate at range 1, and ESGs don't stop explosions (of course, you could run with the ESG at range 1).

Finally, you're assuming that all of the degradation points are

going to the same set of panels. They probably aren't, and it's going to take a lot longer than you think to make the Andro nervous (don't forget that he can fix two points per turn). Even if you stay away on turn 1, he'll pin you in the corner on turn 2 and blast you. You can fire back with overloads, of course, but you won't do internals, and next turn you'll be facing the rear panels at long range, with a shield to favor the next time he comes around. By then, he'll have done "The Dump" and have clear front panels (except for degradation, of course), so he can rip down another shield with a few (3-6) internal, while again you will do no internal. Don't forget that he can also be doing hit-and-run raids.

By the end of the third or fourth turn, you've lost 2/3 of your forward shielding, taken up to 10 internals, and done nothing in return except degradation. On the next battle pass, you'll get munched on. Granted that by this time you may be able to give back a few internals, but you won't be in much shape to follow up on it. This is assuming, of course, that neither of you makes any serious blunders along the way, and that you both make roughly average die rolls.

REPLY BY KEN BURNSIDE: A fast Lyran is a winning Lyran. A Lyran is about the only ship out there that can standard arm some weapons (and hold the rest for free) and run down an Andro. On any turn that you come in, attack, and displace, the Lyran can generally dish out enough phaser damage to make dumping your panels a tricky matter at best. The Lyran is just as fast as an Andro, and on the re-arming turn, the Andro is going to have full panels on one side or the other, while the Lyran will have all its weapons up and ready to go.

MICHAEL GASTRIGHT

The Lyran is a power-hungry ship lacking in long-range offensive capability. Its specialty weapon has proven to be one of the most difficult to employ.

The Lyran appears hampered by something every time he turns around (which he doesn't do that quickly). He is forced to run the luck of the dice with his disruptors or forced to get close to use his ESGs. Taking a disruptor-armed ship in close to the enemy violates standard doctrine (since any enemy will have more crunch power than you do).

Flying the Lyran teaches you how to maneuver! You learn that you must control the flow of the game to win. No relying on your heavy weapons to finish off your opponent quickly. No desire to go toe-to-toe with anyone. Every new player should start with the Lyran, just to learn how to throw the ship around the map when you need to.

Against the Federation, you don't want to get close to use your ESGs offensively early on because the odds that you will get hammered with four overloaded photons at range 4 are very significant (it gets worse as you get closer, but at least you can do damage if you can get closer). If the range-4 shot works, a good Mizia should leave you without your ESGs. You can try to wait him out, but then your other heavy weapon just sits there.

Against plasma races (Gorn and Rom), you are caught in the same predicament. You can't get close unless he has used most of his torpedoes, and staying away on a tournament map is less than easy. Oh, if you only had some drones to slow him down. Of course, if a Romulan cloaks, then it is his own fault when he dies. The ISC is a weak plasma ship with the ability to touch someone (hard) at range 15.

Against the Klingon, the UIM puts the odds in his favor. His drones should be unable to get through your ESGs although a scatter-pack aimed at you will leave your ESGs equally unable to damage him.

Against the Andromedan, I don't think the continual disruptor-induced panel degradation will do you much good. I would much rather be in a Klingon if I were going to try this than a Lyran! Trying to get four disruptor hits at ranges 9-15 is a waste

of time and just wears out the rifles of the firing squad. Even if you do, it is possible for the Andromedan to fix degradation just as fast as the Lyran put it there (using just the disruptors, that is).

Against the Neo-Tholian, although your ESGs have the potential of doing more damage than his web caster (and they BOTH eat energy like it was going out of style), the actual damage per device is significantly on the side of the Tholian from ranges 4 through 30.

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

Like all tournament ships, this ship has something that makes it truly unique, a system which you must master before you can be truly skilled as a Lyran captain. I'm referring, of course, to the expanding sphere generator, or ESG.

The ESG is a close-range weapon. Unlike most other weapons, you simply can't do any damage with this one from outside range 3. Even a pitiful phaser-3 can at least do a point of damage some of the time as far out as range 15, but not the ESG. To properly use this device offensively, you have to get close, and you are faced with a dilemma: to be effective, you have to close with your enemy (subjecting yourself to his weapons fire from as close as range 4) before you can seriously hurt him.

Before you start any battle, you have to decide if you're going to use the ESG offensively or defensively. Your tactics depend, more so than with any other tournament ship, on exactly what ship your opponent is flying. If he's a drone user, use the ESGs strictly to block drones. If he's got weapons which require him to overrun you to be effective, use the ESGs to keep him away. Against plasmas, your tactics depend more on his actions than anything else. If he has long-range weapons (disruptors, PPDs, etc.), this is where you go on the offensive. And against hellbores, you can even use the spheres as a damage sponge!

If your enemy is armed with drones (i.e., a Kzinti, Klingon, or WYN, or possibly the Orion if he takes drones in his option mounts), your ESGs will cancel his seeking weapon firepower. You can use both of them to erase his scatter-pack, if he has one, or (preferably) to take out the drones from his ship, which is where the dangerous type-IVs are more likely to come from. If you can, try to use just one ESG at a time for this, keeping the other available for emergencies. You can then mark the empty one destroyed if you take any internals. However, when using the ESG to kill drones, be careful that you have enough ESG strength to actually kill every drone coming your way, or else you could end up damaging them all but killing none. ESGs must work in combination with your phasers.

Against an overrun race, such as the Hydran, Orion, WYN, or Fed, employ the ESGs to keep him away. Put them up at range 3 and fly at him obliquely. If he fires at you, turn, ram him, and fire through the resulting down shield. You might even turn away (with a HET plotted) and tempt him into firing, then HET into him; however, you risk losing weapons to internals before you can execute this maneuver. The Fed is particularly dangerous because range 4 is one of his optimum ranges, and nothing you can do can keep him from achieving it.

Against a plasma ship, you will find it hard to employ your ESGs. Their main purpose will probably be deterring the Gorn Anchor. If you try to charge in on him, he'll feed you plasma for lunch. And if you try to HET into him (as above), he'll gladly take the 40 or so internals you're going to give him and then (since you've conveniently turned to face him) slap you in tractor and nuke you. If (in the case of the Rom) he's foolish enough to cloak during a rearming turn, you should make short work of him, but that doesn't mean you'll never see him cloak. He still might do so after launching a large spread of plasma your way. A plasma ship is going to be your toughest challenge. Your only real hope for survival is to wait until he's expended both of his heavy torpedoes and then try a high-speed overrun.

OFFENSIVE USE OF THE ESG

If you're going to do this, you have to take care in raising your ESGs at the proper time and at the proper range. Don't raise them too early, or he might be able to evade you. Don't wait too long, or he could wind up inside them, where he'll pummel you before you can get them to hit. And whatever you do, don't put them at range 0, or he'll just tractor you, and they'll be useless. Range 1 is a good choice, but if you're really worried about his evading them, put the ESGs at range 3. It's very hard to avoid a sphere seven hexes in diameter that's blazing across the board towards your ship!

Using the ESG against a hellbore ship deserves special attention. Against hellbores, expanding spheres can be utilized as an "extra shield" to block the Hydran's (Orion's, WYN's) hellbore fire. While the hellbores will automatically hit your ESGs, that is damage that has NO chance of hitting your ship! The Lyran is perhaps the only ship in the game which can safely lose a shield and still avoid being Miziaed by a hellbore-armed opponent.

ESG NOTES

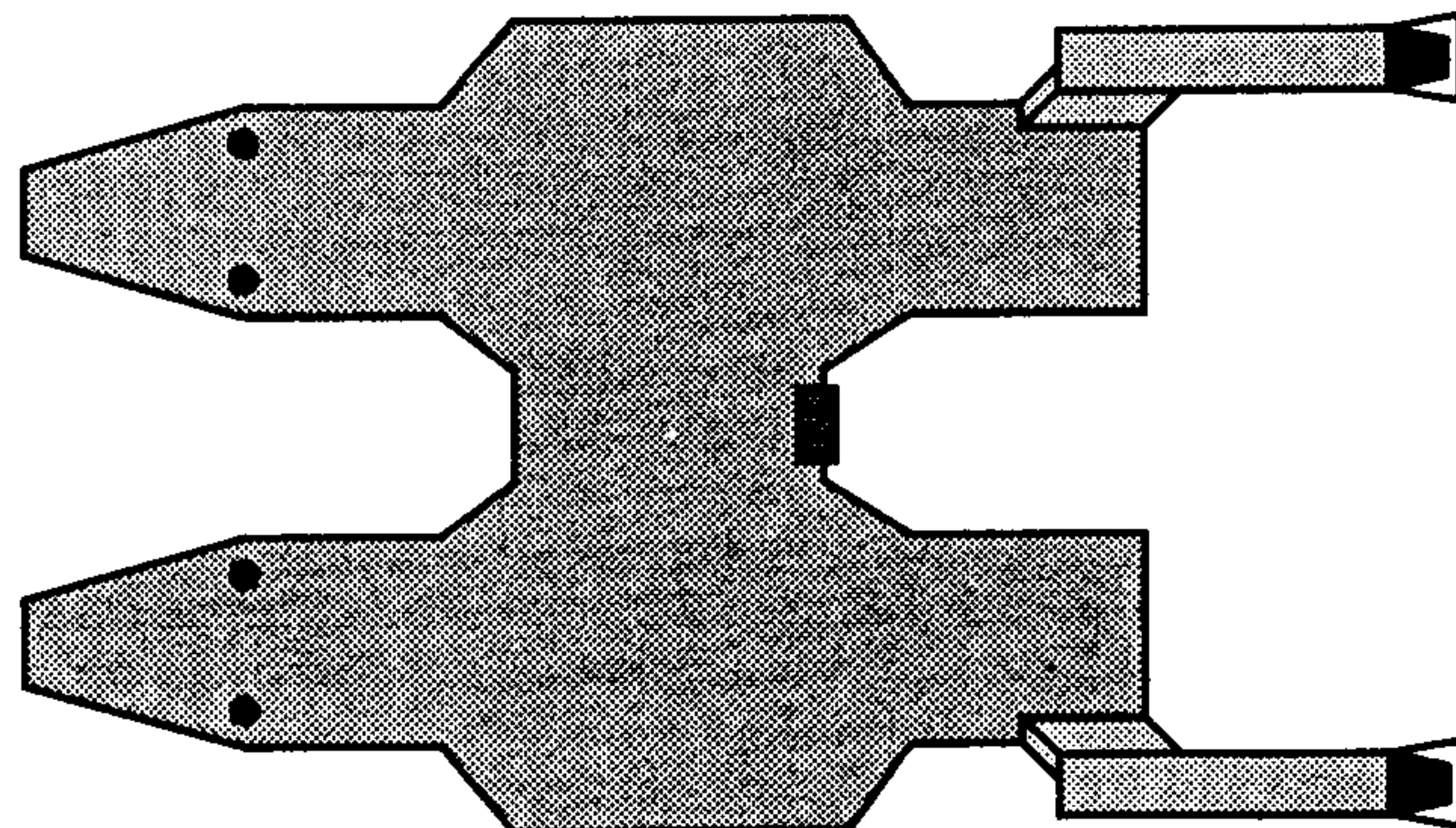
First, don't forget the capacitors; they start with two points of power (left over from the original charge), so to rearm them to full (5 point) level takes only three points. Also, you don't have to fully arm them immediately. You can always put power in over several turns as though they're a multi-turn weapon. If you don't have power to arm both at once (very likely), fully arm one and use the other to absorb any ESG internal hits. If you repair a destroyed one, do it without the capacitor; it will only take three turns to fix it (cost of repair is 10).

THE OTHER WEAPONS

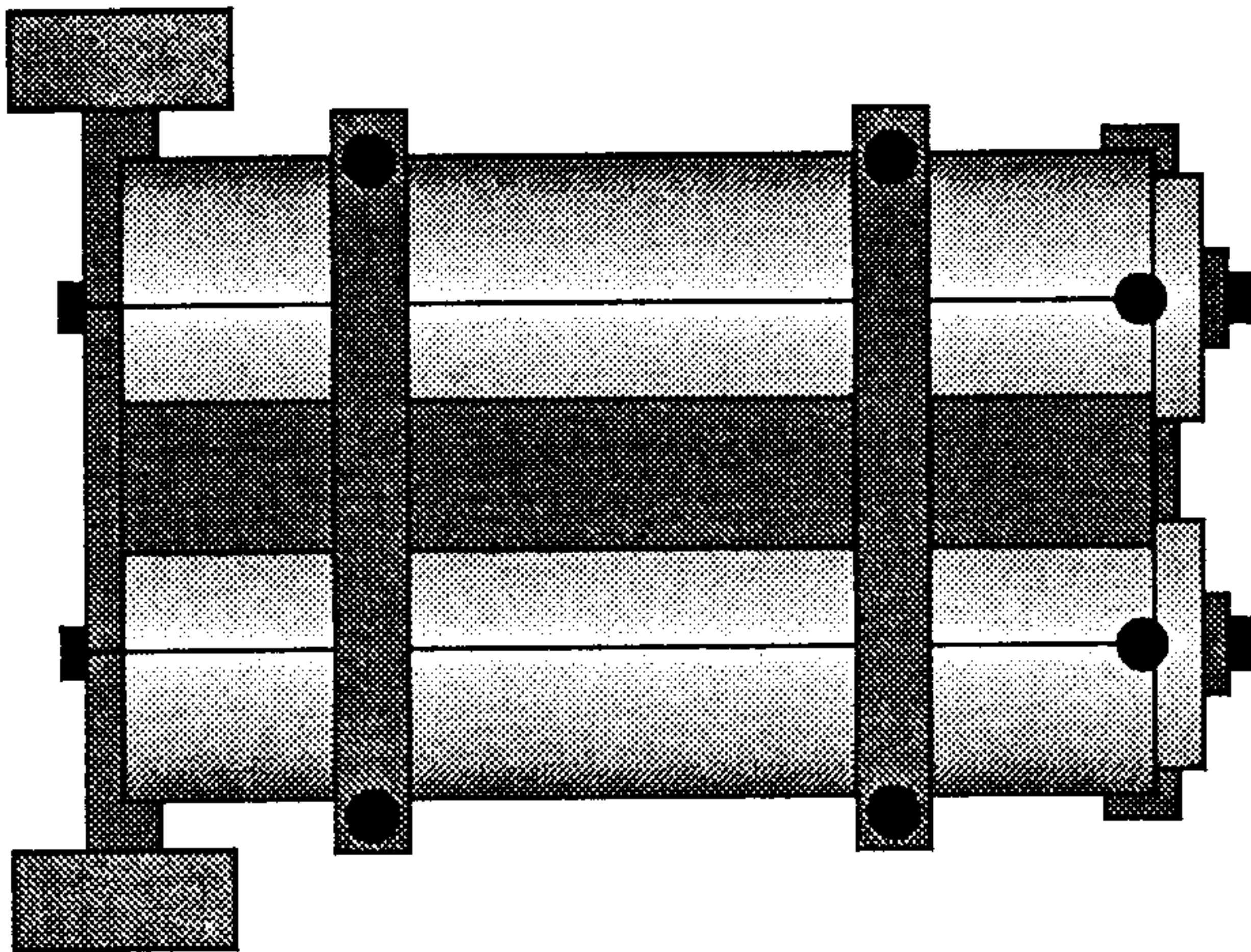
While the ESGs are Topic #1 for the Lyrans, they are not the only weapons on the Lyran ship. It has four disruptors and the power to charge them (if you aren't rearming ESGs). The Lyran is capable of flying as fast as speed 20 the entire turn with full overloads, or even faster if it burns batteries. It also has eight phaser-1s and two phaser-3s, as much or more than any other tournament ship, and every one of these can fire down the row of hexes directly ahead of the ship (obviously the favorite place to put your enemy, if you can). This kind of firepower should make the White Tiger an even match for any other direct-fire race in the tournament.

Advantages of the Lyran: Two ESGs, large array of phasers, 40 points of power, two separate shuttle bays (for the double suicide-shuttle launch tactic), three aux and three bridge make it one of the best-controlled tournament ships, four transporters instead of the nearly standard three.

Disadvantages: Can be power-hungry when rearming ESGs, finds the going very difficult against plasma ships, just one flag or emergency bridge to protect sensor and scanner tracks (obvious places to guard), ESGs are vulnerable to Mizia fire.



WYN TACTICS



MARC COCHERL, WYN COMMANDER

The advantages and disadvantages of the WYN tournament ship are not all really apparent.

SPEED: Your acceleration is limited to 10. You cannot use mid-turn speed changes as effectively as your opponents. If for any reason your speed falls below 10, or you hit the wall, your chances of surviving are slim. Your greatest advantage is your speed. A WYN AuxBC that enters combat at less than speed 20 has a fool at the helm. **SPEED IS LIFE.** At high speed your ship can charge all weapons and spacekeeping. You can outrun shuttles/fighters, lessen the damage from plasmas, and run drones out of fuel or at the very least handle them at your leisure.

TURN MODE: The WYN AuxBC hasn't been dubbed the "Greyhound" without good reason. It flies with the speed of a champion racer and turns like a bus. In many cases the turn mode chart on the WYN SSD is THE most important chart you have. Before you make any decision on your speed, check the chart. Dropping your speed by one or two in order to have a tighter turn mode may save you from watching a slower Klingon turn inside your ship and get on your tail. The competent WYN captain ALWAYS has one eye on the wall. A HET should only be considered in the most desperate of circumstances. In the majority of cases, if a WYN has to HET, the battle is already lost.

WEAPONS: A hard hitting alpha strike cannot be stressed enough. With four plasma-Fs, the WYN TC can go toe-to-toe with a Federation TC and win. The more balanced combination of two plasma-Fs and two phaser-Gs is more effective against plasma and drone-users, but limits your long-range firepower. The combination of a plasma-S and two plasma-Fs is the best way to deal with a Hydran (shotgun the S against the fighters).

Weapons mixes that should not be taken are:

Disruptors: Firing arcs, lack of maneuverability, and small alpha strike make you easy meat against any opponent.

Photons: The warp energy needed to power the photons destroys the only advantage the WYN TC has, speed.

Drones: Without the ability to control more than six, no heavy weapons, your opponent need never close to phaser range.

Tactics: Keep your speed above 20; if your opponent is running from you at high speed, he isn't arming all his weapons or using tractors or transporters. Don't use your drones as auxiliary weapons; use them like a Kzinti. You can win a tractor auction against any other TC. Use your tractors offensively; grab drones and shuttles; do the Gorn Anchor to prevent your opponent from using a wild weasel or just slam the enemy ship into the wall.

Other than the Andromedan, the WYN is the most difficult TC to fly well. Be aggressive; achieve victory! Good Hunting!

FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

Fleet Captain Gilson won the 1990 GenCon Tournament flying the WYN tournament cruiser.

The *Ballistic Pig* is the most unmaneuverable vessel in the tournament. Not only does it have a turn mode of D (tied for worst with the Gorns, ISC, and Feds), but it also has a bad HET breakdown number AND NO HET BONUS. Finally, it can only accelerate by 5 or double with a maximum of 10! These are serious deficiencies. Plan your attack so as not to fall prey to them.

A major nemesis for the WYN is the Andromedan. It just runs circles around you. It can hop over you because you can't HET.

Next, your weapons. You are faced, before the tournament, with a choice of option mounts which you must stick with for the entire ordeal. There are four packages I have seen used:

1. A photon in each wing and two hellbores up front. This gives you the ability to do a lot of damage, but few phasers, and those heavy weapons are going to suck up tons of power. The WYN ship has good power, but not after attempting to power all four weapons. I can't recommend this choice (also, the photons are LF+L/RF+R, making it awkward to fire them together).

2. A phaser-G in each wing and two hellbores up front. This remedies the phaser situation and the power situation of option 1, but leaves you with very little long-range firepower. You're like a Hydran with lousy maneuverability and drones replacing the Stingers. The hellbores are not hit on drone, but on torpedo (under the WYN tournament rules), so they go away quickly after internals (forget about repairing them). I can't recommend this.

3. A phaser-G RS, a disruptor LS, and two hellbores up front. This is a compromise. You increase the phaser firepower to acceptable levels, and you still have a good power balance. The disruptor not only shields the hellbores against internal hits, but also can be repaired in one turn (as range 10). It also fires out the back (LS). Why an LS disruptor? Because it starts the game with the opponent in arc. That disruptor, combined with four phaser-1s should be able to weaken a shield enough for those hellbores.

4. A phaser-G LS, phaser-G RS, and two FP plasma-Fs. This loadout has been used with success on a number of occasions, simply because it gives an incredible power balance. You can go speed 31 on turn 1 with 12 points in tractor beam (or whatever). The object is to grab the enemy, dump drones and plasma, and phaser hose them after the seeking weapons hit. That's rather simplistic, but it does work. However, this package has severe negatives. You MUST get close to do damage. An opponent with large crunch potential or a cloaking device or who can outmaneuver you will beat you every time.

KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

General tactics are to play this ship aggressively, pin your opponent against the wall, and hope any Tholians you meet are idiots when it comes to web. This ship can muscle down on a Gorn or a Fed if played right. It has a very hard time against an opponent who specializes in maneuver and opportunity fire, such as your typical Orion or Klingon.

One option mount combo that we've found to be loads of fun is two hellbores and two disruptors. This allows you to do obnoxious things with the power balance by simply not arming the disruptors for a turn. If the hellbore is too rich for you, consider going with two wing disruptors, one hellbore, and one photon. We're evenly split about the merits of having a third disruptor in place of the photon.

This ship is one of the very few that can maintain speed 31 indefinitely while arming heavy weapons. This can give you a maneuverability advantage to exploit.

The Andro, properly played, can eat this thing for lunch. Most Andro players know this.

Side option mounts should be either phaser-1s, phaser-Gs, or disruptors. Never put a weapon in the side mounts that can't make use of the full firing arc. That arc is the only compensation you have for the turn mode of a semi with blown hydraulics.

Try and pick option mounts that will let you maintain a speed of at least 17 through an entire turn of arming. A 17-24 split is one of the best flight plans this ship ever had. With a low-power option mount set, consider a 24-31 split.

Mismatched option mounts in the side are worth looking into, but exercise extreme caution. An opponent who feels he has less to fear from a Gatling phaser than he does a disruptor will stay on your gatling side. And taking a weapon that has reduced firing arcs, like the fusion beam or the photon, can leave you with an embarrassing blind spot.

While you have the drone racks of the Kzinti, you don't have the drone upgrades. Your speed-20 drones can be easily outrun, at least for a time. They also make nice "flankers" to ride in with on a close over-run.

SIDE MOUNTS

1. Phaser-1: Generally, the most flexible.
2. Phaser-G: Wonderful defensively, wonderful offensively. A smart opponent will evade you, however.
3. Disruptor : Reverse of the phaser-G above. It's much harder to evade disruptors, however. This is the most expensive one to arm.
4. Plasma-D: A good weapon that can be either seeking or direct fire. Works quite well in concert with your drone racks. Also costs no power to use.

Mix and match as you please with these. Most other options aren't viable due to the reduction of firing arcs or the re-arm time.

Unless you're in a tournament that has banned the plasma races, don't even consider taking ADDs.

FORWARD MOUNTS

Your options revolve around your tactics. The *Battle Bucket* cannot afford a long fight — that only gives an opponent more time to get behind him and kill him.

1. Hellbores: The weapon of choice. You really only need one of them if your supplemental weapons are used properly. Two of them take too much to arm, even for the *Pig*.
2. Photons: These work wonders in conjunction with the hellbore. Provided that both of them hit.
3. Disruptors: These need to be combined with more of them in the side mounts.
4. Plasmas: These have superior firing arcs over conventional heavy weapons. The disadvantage is that, if you want comparable damage, you must sacrifice range. Plasma-Fs don't have the chase ability of plasma-Ss.
5. Phaser-Gs: If you're going with the plasma-F/phaser-G combo, consider making the phasers FA and the plasmas LP/RP.
6. Phaser-1s: While you can't be as good of a phaser-1 gunboat as the Orion, you are still a respectable one.

This ship has great difficulty in arming more than two photons or hellbores to overload levels at once, while keeping the speed it needs to kill an opponent.

RATED ACE GREGG DIECKHAUS, LYRAN COMMANDER

By far, this ship is the least maneuverable of all TCs. The big problems are its inability to HET or accelerate. The WYN ship will breakdown 66% of the time. The only time you should HET is when you have lost the game if you don't. It is a pure desperation maneuver, but if you can pull it off...well, you will have tactical surprise because it is something no one ever expects you to do. The bad maneuver rating is not quite as awful as most people would think. With this ship barreling in at speed 30+, players can't afford to go slow, and if they speed up, their turn mode gets just as bad as yours.

OPTION MOUNTS, A POTPOURRI

"Clendenney special" (named for the winner of GenCon/Origins 1988 Patrol Tournament): Two phaser-Gs and two plasma-Fs. The idea with this ship is rather simplistic. Charge your opponent, tractor him, and kill him. With this option package, you will have 12 points of power left over moving at speed 31. You will have problems with several ships though. The problem with this variant is it MUST get to at least range 3, and you have problems getting there against the Fed, the Plasma Boys, and the Tholian. However, the WYN is a true "John Wayne" ship. A lot of times, it can take your opponent's best punch and still keep coming. It retains much of its firepower because it takes three torpedo hits to get to the gatlings, and the F-torps can still fire after being destroyed.

Plasma WYN: Four plasma-Fs. This ship uses the tactics above, but lacks phaser firepower. This is usually its downfall.

Hydranized WYN: The WYN is a better Hydran than the Hydran TC. With phaser-Gs and hellbores, this ship is *impressive!* Note that phasers in the option mounts are hit on phaser (not torpedo) hits, even under the tournament rules.

Torpedo WYN: Two photons, two hellbores. The torpedo damage this ship can dish out is impressive. However, it is a power hog. Fortunately, the WYN has lots of power, but you still don't have enough to move at 30+. These weapons work well, but leave you noticeably phaser light. This variant will definitely have trouble with a Kzinti. An offshoot of this variant is the two photon, one hellbore, one ph-G (in the nose) variant. Basically the same ship, except you have helped out your drone defense.

One of Each WYN: These mounts (it sounds crazy) do seem to work. A LS phaser-G, an FA photon, an FA hellbore, and an RP plasma-F. The phaser-G helps drone defense, the photon and hellbore give it some long-range punch, and the plasma-F can be used as a damage sponge, yet still put out some damage.

DON'T FORGET YOUR DRONES

Drones are the key to victory in the WYN. It has been my experience that 80%+ of my kills in the WYN came from type-IV drones hitting a down shield. I usually save the type-IV drones for the *coup de grace*, the finishing off of a weakened opponent or for someone who wasted too many phasers on my ship.

This ship has problems employing drones defensively. It cannot use them to intercept enemy drones while charging at an enemy because the WYN is just flying too fast. Your drones are limited to speed-20, so you outrun them. Even worse, if you aren't careful, your own drones will hit you (F2.54).

The WYN is a ship with awesome capabilities, offset by its awesome disadvantages. Few people are surprised by the *Ballistic Pig's* power curve. It will truly take an exceptional player to fly it to victory for the gold hat. (*It has finished #2.*)

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

Next to the Andromedan, this is probably the strangest ship in the tournament. Picture a ship with more than enough power to do anything it wants, but with the worst possible turn mode, a breakdown rating of 3-6, and no HET bonus. Not only that, but its acceleration is limited to +5 or double the current speed (max +10). Face it, this is a ship that has NO maneuverability. Ensure that your opponent does not get behind you because, if he does, he will be able to stay there for the rest of the scenario, and most of your weapons will be unable to shoot at him.

The best way to prevent this is with a good choice of optional weapons. Yes, the WYN is equipped with four option mounts, and unlike the Orion ship, all of them can hold heavy weapons. (Add to this your four drone racks, and you have a very heavily-armed ship, even if the drones are speed-20.) The key to keeping the enemy off your back is your choice of weapons in the side mounts. These are the only ones you're going to have any chance of shooting at him if he follows you. Plasma torpedoes

are excellent weapons for these mounts because they might convince him to turn away. Gatlings are good if he gets too close. Don't take photons, or you'll limit your firing arcs too much.

The other two (forward-facing) option mounts will provide you with your heavy firepower, but they will be hard to employ because of the ship's lack of maneuverability. You will be able to get off one good shot with these (probably on the first turn) and then will have to really struggle to get them into arc again. Pick something with a heavy punch, like photons or hellbores. And choose well because you will not be able to change them during the tournament like the Orion can.

One thing the WYN does better than anyone else is the Gorn Anchor. The ship has 37 points of power but a movement cost of only 2/3. It can quite easily go speed-30, power the necessities of life, and still put up a 10-point tractor (or more). If your enemy foolishly gets too close to you, slap him in tractor and then turn about to face him. You can then pound him at your leisure.

This huge amount of power has plenty of applications other than tractor beams. If your opponent is not close by, you can put it in shield reinforcement, possibly blocking internals if he should reach overload range. You can power just about any weapons you want, even two photons and two hellbores if you wish. And you'll never run out of phaser energy, either.

If you're really concerned about someone following you (and you should be), you might consider reversing direction in mid-turn. Plot a low speed, say 10 or so, on impulse #1, and use (C12.37) to reverse direction in mid-turn on impulse #9. [You have to wait eight impulses because of (C12.371).] Then as soon as you can afford to (depending on your power levels), accelerate by 5 in reverse. This is the WYN alternative to the HET. If done properly, your opponent (who will expect you to be blazing along at speed 30) will zip right past you, enabling you to nail him with all your forward-facing option mounts. Of course, like all tactics it will not work in all circumstances (e.g., against an armed plasma ship), but (you've got to admit) it's something your opponent isn't going to be expecting. Of all the tournament ships, you are the only one who has the power for this maneuver and the need to use it. Retrograding is a sure way to keep him from chasing you later in the scenario. If ever a ship was built for the retrograde, the WYN is it.

There are two things you shouldn't bother wasting power on. The first is (obviously) an HET. The only time the WYN should ever make a HET is in utter desperation, i.e., you're faced with a situation where, unless you HET, you will lose the scenario immediately. Even if you have a possible chance to win if you successfully pull off a high energy turn, DON'T risk it. You will go home saying, "Why the heck did I do that?"

The other thing to avoid is the WW. Don't arm one because you don't want to be tempted to use it. There is no point because, if you stop, you are dead meat. It will take you three turns to get back up to just speed 20, and by then any plasma ship will be fully re-armed and coming in again to destroy you. Your speed is the only thing that can save you from plasma, so use it to your advantage. And whatever you do, DON'T tractor a plasma ship that still has torpedoes armed. You won't live to regret it.

Advantages of the WYN: An unbelievable power curve (37 power with a war cruiser movement cost); 10 cargo to act as "pseudo-armor;" 10 APR is tough to destroy and often survives even when you're crippled; four options and four drones give the ship plenty of firepower; non-phaser option mounts are destroyed on torpedo hits, so you can put just about any combination of options in there that you like without worrying about the Mizia.

Disadvantages: The ship cannot turn, accelerate, or HET (other than that, it's quite maneuverable); you have real problems if your enemy gets behind you and stays there; phaser firepower is weak (four phaser-1s and three phaser-3s), the weakest except the Andro; no flag bridge to protect the sensor track; sensor/scanner tracks are unusually small; the ship has only two transporters; the ship has no probe (oh, darn).

ISC TACTICS

FLEET CAPTAIN FRANK GILSON

The ISC ship is very interesting. You are the ultimate 'scrape' ship. You slowly wear your opponent down until he has little front shielding left. Then you kill him.

This does lead to a disadvantage. You don't have a good crunch potential. Your only deterrent to pursuit is your plasmas, none of which are the longer ranged S-torps.

ADVANTAGES

1. A good phaser suite that can fire anywhere in the FA arc and mostly in the FH arc with a fair amount firing out the back.
2. Plasmas with launch arcs covering 360°. Often all you need to do is turn or TAC to get a new torpedo in arc. Beware the limited launch direction and limited launch rate of the rear F-torps.
3. You have the PPD, essentially like firing four disruptors, one every impulse. Even better, because of splash (and good hit numbers at long range). The key is to employ it more than once.
4. Low arming cost for your weapons allows extra speed.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Tied for worst turn mode with three other ships.
2. That PPD tends to go away with a blast of internals of even modest size because it is the only drone hit on the ship! This is the key; you MUST employ the PPD as often as possible.
3. Your rear F-torps are under quite restrictive launch restrictions. In practice this doesn't matter much at longer ranges but up close to an enemy it can.
4. The PPD has a blind spot. You can't fire it inside range 4. This means you must avoid knife fighting like the plague.

TACTICS

On the first turn I generally plan to cruise up and obliquely by the opponent, firing the PPD at range 10 (for max to hit and damage). When inside range 8, I dump six phaser-1s at the shield now damaged by the PPD, and as I leave, I dump a plasma-G and a plasma-F to discourage pursuit. (If pursued, I should be able to hit the injured shield, and I've made sure both torps are in the same hex). I don't feel comfortable doing this against the Fed (who would dump on a rear shield).

Turn 2 is a running turn, trying to reload what I can while maintaining speed (not arming phasers if I can't afford to). After that, I try to scrape with PPD and phasers while keeping the opponent away with plasmas (or punishing pursuit with plasmas).

An important side point is that those plasma-G torpedoes just beg to be fast-loaded. This is of KEY importance. You'd rather put out a pursuit discourager now than wait a turn and party up close and personal. Also, if you do get stuck inside range 10, a fast-loaded plasma-F every second turn is better than a slow-loaded plasma-G every third turn.

How does the ISC ship get defeated? A high crunch ship wades through its damage output (taking it on several shields with some minor reinforcement and some phasers vs. plasmas) and pops it big time up close. The Fed and Hydran don't need to tractor you; the Gorn, Romulan, and Kzinti will probably try for an anchor. Be aware when you're trapped. Try to discourage pursuit and avoid close range, but if you get stuck, stop, TAC, and shield reinforce. That would be a good time for an overloaded PPD (not otherwise generally employable) if you have it ready.

OTHER POINTS

1. The Hydran is a particularly difficult problem. It can phaser down your torpedoes. I'd try to scrape by range 5 and use phasers against fighters if they're out.
2. If an opponent is going slowly and strongly reinforcing a

shield, punish him for it. Dump both G-torps before obliquing. They'll easily catch up. Put an F-torp out the back as well. You WANT your enemy to decelerate and weasel. You PRAY for that. No ship can take advantage like you can with your PPD and two turn F-torps.

3. The Andro can be somewhat difficult (you'll never get a hit with seeking plasmas), so practice against one. Remember that all the PPD damage will hit one set of panels if fired dead on. He'll try to minimize that. You must avoid losing the PPD early.

KEN BURNSIDE, STAR FLEET STAFF

Most ISC players hate their tournament ship since it lacks the traditional feature of being 15% larger than an opponent of the same class.

Another thing to consider about employing the PPD. While it does do better damage at long range than disruptors, that damage is spread out over three shields. Often in a Klingon, I'll reinforce my #2 & #6 shields and let him gnaw on my #1. (It's my least important forward shield.) I'm not afraid of his plasma as much as he's afraid of my scatter-pack, and he can't afford to lose ANY of his front shields. The PPD is such a lovely thing to see hit on a die roll of 3; the only thing better is a hellbore. You have to use that PPD at least twice to win with the ISC. Against a competent opponent with a better turn mode (almost everyone), you may have to HET to get the second shot in.

One hidden strength of the ISC ship is its durability. This is a trait it shares with the Lyran: balanced hull.

REPLY BY FRANK GILSON: Ken mentions the ISC ship should be more frightened of his scatter-pack than he is of the ISC plasmas. I don't think that's the case. Stopping drones are what all of those ISC phaser-3s are for. Besides, the main use of the scatter-pack is to deter pursuit for the Klingon. The ISC ship is not interested in pursuing. Ken also mentions that the ISC ship can't afford to lose any front shields. That's not exactly true. If I've fired the PPD three times and lost those three shields, the enemy has probably taken more damage than I have. More so than some ships, the ISC ship needs to respect the "use all your shields" advice.

FLEET CAPTAIN TOM CARROLL

I've found that arming EPTs really helps this ship. Not many opponents will want to go through one to two EPTs, an F-torp, six phaser-1s, and a PPD to try a Gorn Anchor, especially if you move fast enough to stay out of range 3.

RATED ACE BRUCE GRAW, ORION COMMANDER

This is what some consider the weakest of the three "plasma boats." While the Romulan and Gorn can field 100 points of (non-enveloping) plasma at once, the ISC can realistically only launch 60, one of those a rear-firing type-F torpedo. Still, 60 points of plasma is nothing to sneer at, although it would take a great deal of effort to get that much out at once (considering the ship's torpedo arcs).

The ISC is a *finesse* ship, one that a beginner would find tough to play successfully. Unlike nearly all the other tournament cruisers, it really has no desire to get up close to anyone. This is in sharp contrast to the other plasma ships, which prefer to try a Gorn Anchor technique. The ISC, on the other hand, is hampered by its lack of heavy plasma firepower and the fact that it employs the PPD, a long-range weapon and one easily destroyed by even a single volley of internals.

Perhaps the best tactic for the ISC is to lob an enveloping plasma at its opponent on the first turn, followed up by the PPD

from range 10. The enveloper and the PPD in combination, along with the threat of a second enveloper, will be more than enough to keep the enemy from closing the range with impunity. If he does try to charge you, and eats both the PPD and two enveloping type-G torpedoes, his shields will be very weak, making him vulnerable to your rear-firing torpedoes and your nicely positioned phasers. In addition, once his shields are all but gone, you can fire your plasma-Gs as fast-loads. In this respect, the otherwise weak G-torpedoes are the equal of an S-torp.

The one thing you must avoid is losing the PPD. As long as you have it, you can inflict serious damage to your opponent from nearly anywhere on the map. Unfortunately, the only way to keep the PPD safe is to avoid taking internals since you don't have any other convenient drone hits to protect it from destruction. And, once it's destroyed, you will NEVER get it repaired since it takes 15 points of CDR (four turns) to fix it. So, in essence, your tactics are simple: Keep the enemy away from you as much as possible, and use enveloping plasmas in concert with the PPD to hammer away until all his shields are gone.

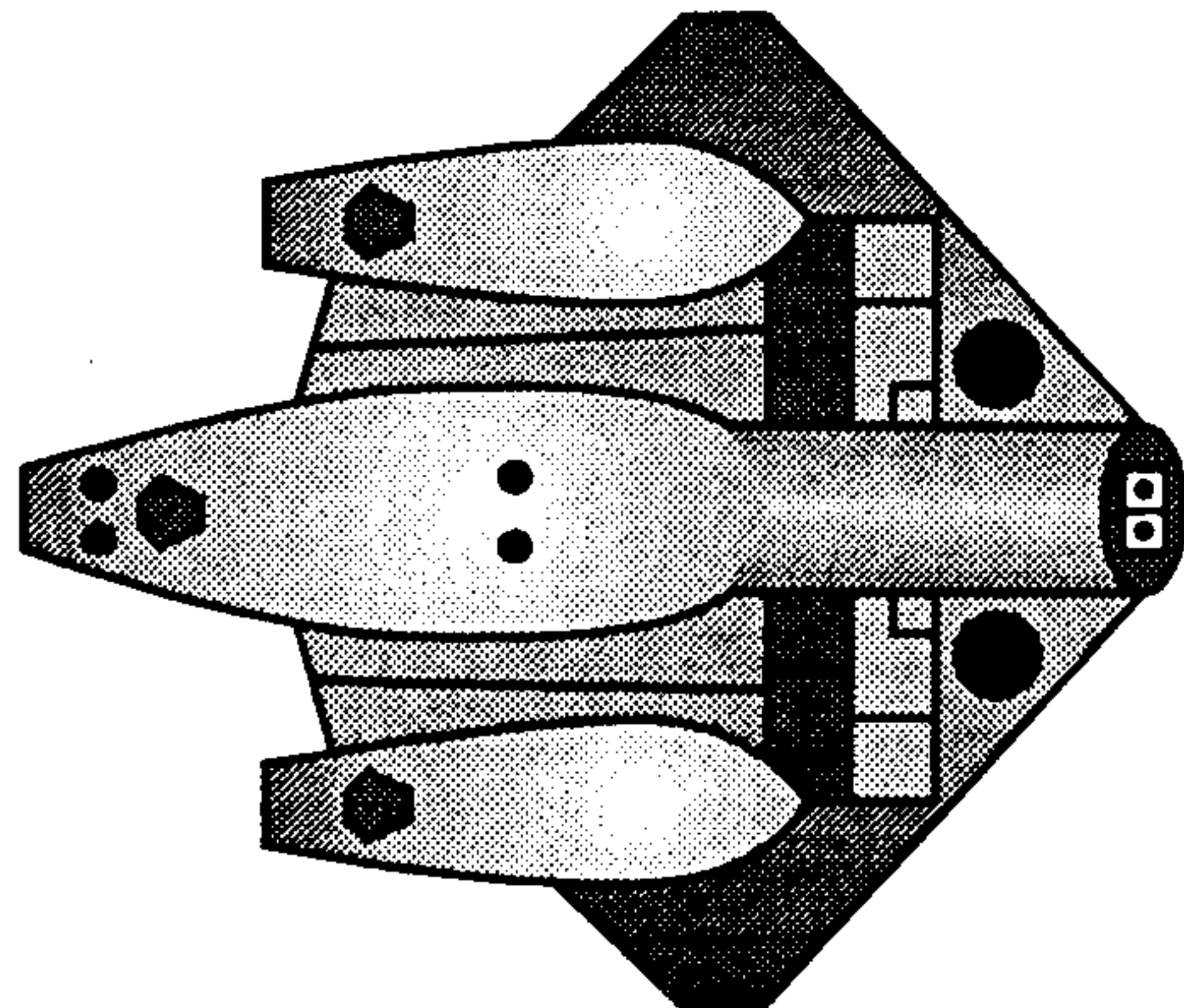
The PPD's best range is 4-10 hexes, which is problematic since to use it you almost guarantee giving your opponent overload range. Against the Fed, for example, you may wish to use it in the 11-15 range bracket, then lob an enveloper his way and avoid range 8. Against other plasma ships, though, feel free to close to your optimum range, so long as he doesn't have plasmas meeting you at that position.

The best way to use the PPD is after you've already blown down a shield (or several shields) because the damage it does is resolved in separate volleys. Your opponent knows this, so the best time to attempt wavelock is right after he turns and cannot maneuver a different shield towards you. If you're hitting weak or down shields, this might force a HET. Watch out, though, if he's stopped; he might launch a wild weasel to break your lock.

The one problem of the PPD is that it's power-hungry. It costs eight points of power to arm it over the course of two turns. However, don't forget that you don't have to fully arm it all at once. Instead of thinking of it as eight units of power for four pulses of damage, think of it as two points per pulse. If you can only afford two points on the first turn (possibly because you're speeding away from plasmas), you can always undercharge it (giving you fewer pulses if you fire it) then fully arm it with batteries if you wish. The PPD can also be held (important at the start of the game) and even overloaded, although it's hard to use an overloaded PPD unless you properly time your attack. Of course, it really helps if your opponent conveniently stops.

Advantages of the ISC: The PPD (guard it!); excellent phaser arcs (all are at least 180°); four phaser-3s to absorb phaser Mizias; one more phaser-1 than the Romulan; one extra transporter over the average tournament ship.

Disadvantages: Difficult to get a large plasma salvo together; is in serious trouble if it loses the PPD; PPD is power-hungry (4 points to arm) while the ship has "standard" tournament power; poor turn mode (D); no flag bridge (guard the bridge and sensor tracks).



GENERAL TACTICS

MANEUVER IN TOURNAMENTS, by Ken Burnside

Maneuver is the heart of any engagement. Weapons are the soul. The objective of maneuver sums up the objectives of all tactics: To concentrate fire upon your enemy while minimizing damage to yourself.

This article assumes that you have some familiarity with (C12.0) Changing Speed in Mid-Turn. If you have not read this rule, do so. Then read it again. And again.

There are several factors to consider when maneuvering in SFB. This list is by no means exhaustive, and there will always be special cases. The trick is balancing these factors better than your opponent does.

Remember — *failing to plan is planning to fail.*

1. How many hexes of movement are you willing to travel? This will set your offensive strategy by determining the range you'll get to for your weapons, and how much power you have to arm them with.

2. Is your speed your primary defense? Against most opponents, the answer is "yes." If you are planning on using a WW, put great thought and care into the timing of your mid-turn speed change to 14. If speed is your primary defense, you *WILL* need to move at *LEAST* 20 hexes. Slugs get run over.

3. What is your turn mode? Try and time your mid-turn speed changes so that you are at (or near) the top of your turn mode brackets.

4. Where do you want to be on the board, when do you want to be there, and how fast do you want to be going when you get there? Note that how fast you're going at the point you're planning around is perhaps the most crucial factor in all of this as it will determine who moves first and who chooses the range.

5. Don't turn unless you have no other choice or you've planned it. Use your sideslips to bring the weapons into arc and, more importantly, to tighten your turn radius.

6. Always be conscious of your turning radius. When engaging a target that is moving half your speed, you have *QUADRUPLE* the turning radius. High speed isn't always necessary or beneficial.

7. When doing the mid-turn speed change, *ALWAYS* try to arrange it so that you have an "extra" hex of movement so that slowing down to a lower speed doesn't leave you stranded. Coordinating this with the timing on the impulse chart, your turn mode, and your firing arcs takes a *LOT* of practice.

For example, take turn mode B. Speed 15 moves on impulse #15. Speeding up to 21 on impulse #16 will enable you to move on impulses #16 and #17. This gives you three hexes of movement in the middle of the turn.

SPECIAL CASES

1. HETs: Plan these (and allocate them) in advance. Many players are lazy and rely on having five batteries to HET with, and use it when they do not have to. And invariably, they find that they'd rather have the batteries for something else later in the turn.

2. Emergency Deceleration: Never do this. Using a WW never killed your ship. *Using emergency deceleration* (and the 16-impulse period before you can start moving again) are what killed your ship. Because there are no between turn restrictions on how *SLOW* you can go, it's always better to run for impulse #32 and plan than to panic and stop.

3. Reserve Warp: Always have this. Don't use it to HET unless you absolutely have to. If nothing else, it will enable you to gain two hexes of movement (more if you plan it right) and a higher speed bracket, which will determine who moves first in an engagement and who picks the range. Not to mention that it's a wonderful way to outrun a plasma torpedo late in the turn.

4. Tactical Maneuvers: Five points spent in TACs will give you many advantages. A TAC will let you choose which of three shields to take a seeking weapon hit on. They will also allow you to react to an opponent's actions. Unfortunately, react is the key word here. While TACing, you will be hard pressed to force his actions. Also, if you do have to use ED, TACs are more efficient than HETs and are available much sooner. They are a desperation tactic at best.

GOING TO ORIGINS, by Stephen V Cole

Every wargamer, and every SFB gamer in particular, should make it a point to attend Origins at least once in his or her life. It's a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Here are a few pointers.

1. Practice, using the tournament rules and the ship you intend to fly, as often as possible. You *will* fight the way you train, so train the way you intend to fight. Your local group might even conduct a "mock Origins" on a weekend a month before the real one, playing with actual time limits and sleep schedules. You don't know what playing four three-hour games with a one-hour break is like until you try it.

2. Play in a local convention to get used to the noise and pressure of competition.

3. Arrive early. The pace on Thursday is very different from Friday, when the last 30 or so gamers arrive and all want to play their first three rounds in six hours. Arriving Thursday allows you to play a game in the Patrol Tournament first. This gets you in the mood, accustomed to the room and noise, and may expose any surprise rules items (changes, new interpretations, or misunderstandings) before they kill you. Even if you lose that Patrol game, it won't hurt your standing in Fleet Captain's where you lose once and you are history.

4. Go as a group. This divides up the workload and expenses. Those who are going for fun can take care of checking into the hotel, parking the car, and finding the food court. Those there to play for "The Hat" should be free from other concerns as much as possible.

5. Play to become a Rated Ace, not a Fleet Captain. The odds are much better (you have to win three games in a row, not seven), you'll have a place in history and a patch you cannot buy anywhere, and you won't go home disappointed. *After* you make Rated Ace, *then* you can worry about winning The Hat, but those last four games are murder, and any of the 16 Aces could go on to Fleet Captain.

6. Bring along an assortment of headache and cold pills.

7. Pace yourself. Don't go out on all-night drinking binges, at least not until you've been eliminated. Select sleeping accommodations for quiet, not for party and pool facilities. If you are serious about The Hat, don't try to play five other games at Origins. The dealer area will be there all weekend, so use that for mental breaks between tough games.

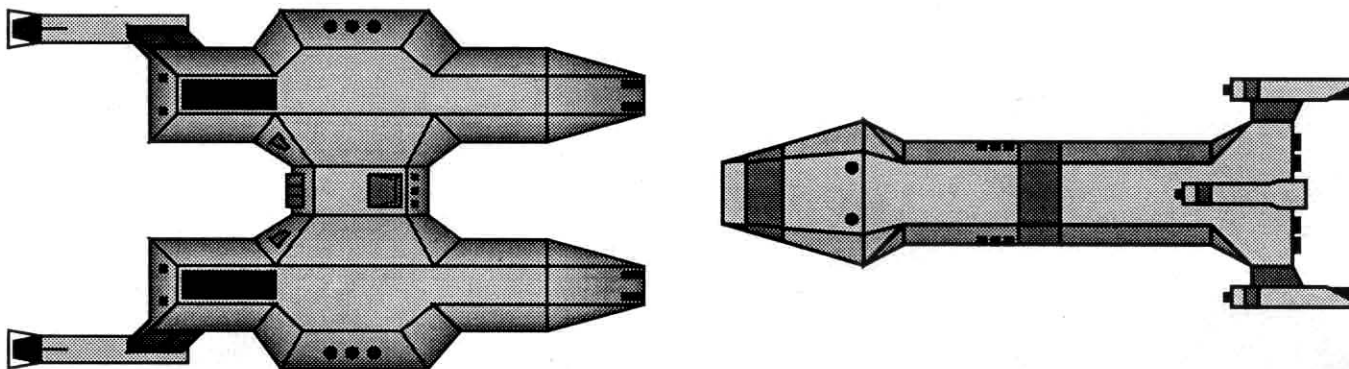
8. Read everything that ADB has taped to the walls. What you do not know can and will kill you.

FLEET CAPTAINS

1983 Origins—Chicago, Jeff "Uncle Remus" Smith, Romulan
 1984 Origins—Dallas, Bill "the Surgeon" Chitwood, Federation
 1985 Origins—Baltimore, Mark "the Assassin" Schultz, Klingon
 1986 Origins—LA, John "Top Phaser" van Caneghem, Romulan
 1987 Origins—Baltimore, Kevin "Mad Dog" Hillock, Orion
 1988 Origins—GenCon, Sandy "Firemane" Hemenway, Kzinti
 1989 Origins—LA, John Viles, Romulan
 1990 Origins—Atlanta, Thomas "Stonewall" Carroll, Gorn
 1990 GenCon—Milwaukee, Frank "Slim" Gilson, WYN
 1991 Origins—Baltimore, Paul Paella, Romulan

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