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Starletter #47 contained the first four JCF review items, and Starletter #48 included additional comments on them. These issues are available for 25¢ each and a stamped self-addressed envelope. Other back issues are not available.

ESTIMATED RELEASE SCHEDULE - STAR FLEET BATTLES - 1987

Released in 1987: SSD #9, Nexus #16 + #17, Reinforcements #2, Tactics Manual, Tournament Book; Miniatures: Rom SkyHawk+SeaHawk, Kzinti Tug, Orion Slaver, Andro Conquistador+ Python. **OCT:** Captain's Log #5; **NOV:** Nexus #18

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TASK FORCE SIGNS DEAL WITH PARAMOUNT

Task Force Games announced that it has signed an Agreement with Paramount (owners of "Star Trek") that will insure the continued production and development of the Star Fleet Universe product line. Under this agreement, Paramount has given Task Force formal permission to use certain items from various "Star Trek" properties (all of which have previously been used in SFB products) and has agreed to take no action against Task Force. This agreement does not provide Task Force with access to any more "Star Trek" materials than have been used in the past. (Specifically: We can't use anything from the movies or from "The Next Generation" and will return any proposals based on them unread.) While the agreement does not change anything, TFG wanted to prevent rumors by telling you the real story immediately. One technical glitch: Under the Agreement, Task Force is required to show certain items to Paramount prior to publication to assure them that no materials outside of the Agreement have been used. The mechanics of this process (working out how many copies of what had to be sent to whom and what form of response was necessary) delayed the production of the already complete CL5 for about six weeks. We regret this delay, but it should be a one-time event and has now been resolved. ADB and TFG express their thanks to Paramount.

STARLETTER TO FEATURE PROTOTYPE RULES SECTIONS

Starletter is presenting new prototype rules sections for your comments. Type your comments. Put your comments for each rule on a separate page with the title at the top. These rules sections may appear in CL#6 (or maybe Volume IV?) sometime next year (AFTER we get the Addenda taken care of, which is why we want your comments).

PROTOTYPE RULES SECTION (P16.0) COMETS (Ray Olesen)

Comets are masses of rock, dirt, and ice that travel in extended orbits around many stars. Comets are sub-light and do not move within game terms. Comets will be used in SFB only if specified by the scenario rules (usually just in front of a Romulan ship).

(P16.1) PLACEMENT: A comet consists of a nucleus (treated as a single hex of asteroids) and a tail of gas particles. The length of the tail varies with the distances to the star, but will always start in the nucleus hex and point away from the star (roll a die for direction if not specified). Length can be specified by the scenario. In deep space,

the length is equal to the total of three dice plus 10. The tail is one hex wide and straight. If at a distance from the star approximately that of the orbit of a habitable planet, the tail would be several hundred hexes long, effectively infinite. Nearer the star, it could be up to 2,000 hexes. In these cases, the first 33% of the tail would be three hexes wide and include the hexes adjacent to the nucleus hex.

(P16.2) EFFECT OF TAIL: The tail (including the nucleus hex) is treated as a dust cloud. Any unit which passes through it is treated (for P13.1) as spending the entire turn in it. In addition, it exposes cloaked ships which enter it. A target in or beyond a comet tail gains one point of ECM for each hex of tail through which the line of fire passes.

JOINT CHIEFS OF FLEETS: ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION

Several proposed rules changes under study by the JCF were listed in Starletter #47. Additional information was published in Starletter #48. To comment on a case, write a letter as follows: It must be typed. Each case must be on a separate page with the case number at the top. No more than one page of comments for each case. Please consult Starletter #47 before sending your comments.

CASE #87-001 CLOAKING COSTS: It now appears likely that these will be resolved (more or less at the costs shown in Starletter #48) in time for CL#5.

CASE #87-002 T-BOMB BALANCE: We are still accumulating suggestions and comments on this case. T-bombs are now an optional rule that has a dramatic effect on play balance. The JCF is seeking an alternative set of T-bomb rules that would affect play balance less profoundly and could be used as a standard rule. This will probably involve a smaller number of bombs (the number to be linked to the size class) and possibly declaring transported (as opposed to dropped) bombs to be non-hidden.

CASE #87-003 EMERGENCY DECELERATION: Heated discussions continue on this case. Surveys show about half of the players are using the original (and official) "Feds only" approach, while the other half use some form of "anyone can buy it". Its use or non-use affects balance, so a decision is required. The Feds can't come up with a technological reason for ED to remain racially limited, but they don't want to lose it. The Coalition points out that whenever ED was invented, everyone would have copied it within 10-20 years, and it was probably invented long before the General War.

CASE #87-004 X-SHIP PLASMA TORPEDOES: The Plasma Boys want X1 torps affected by phasers at 3-to-1 and X2 torps at 4-to-1. They seem to feel that every other weapon was improved in X-tech, but not plasmas. The Committee has rejected any idea of revising the bolt table as this makes seeking torps obsolete.

CASE #87-005 WEB DAMAGE: A new case. Strange as it may seem, the Acting Tholian Web Master (Stacy Bartley) says that webs are too tough. He claims that no one will play against a Tholian 3-Ring Circus because you can't win. He suggests that we consider a radical change in the web rules, allowing webs to be damaged by explosions, and possibly also by weapons fire. This does require a somewhat complex set of mathematics to "balance" the web when one or two hexes are weakened by an attack of some kind. It would be a major change, but it might make webs more fun to play.

CASE #87-006 LYRAN ENERGY CRISIS: Everyone knows that the Lyrans don't have enough energy in most of their ships. Once the initial charge on the ESGs is used, a Lyran captain finds himself dragging around an expensive weapon that he can't afford to reload. Some claim that this is "just part of being Lyran" and that nothing is really wrong that tactics can't fix. This "all is well" bunch also points out that if Lyrans become more effective their BPVs should rise. The other side says that Lyran BPVs are based on the damage that a fully-charged ESG can do, but ignore the fact that it can't be charged if the ship is to keep moving. These "crisis" advocates say that no one wants to play Lyrans because of the power problems and it's ruining the game. The "all is well" crowd says people are tired of rules changes; the "crisis" crowd says they are tired of ships that don't work. Various suggestions have been made including: LIDS (the Lyran Impulse Doubling System), an APR refit, a new ESG chart, or leaving it alone.